



HOMES OF THE FREE

ESSA B. COODEY



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NEW REPUBLIC, INC.
421 West 21st Street,
NEW YORK

HOMES OF THE FREED

The oncoming of three generations
of women from the plantation street
of slavery days, as observed from
the coign of vantage of the oldest
school for Negroes in the South.



HOMES OF THE FREED by Rossa B. Cooley

with an introduction
by J. H. Dillard, Ph.D.

and four wood cuts
by J. J. Lankes



NEW YORK
NEW REPUBLIC, INC.
1926

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TO

The Memory of FRANCES BUTLER
who gave herself to the Islands
and to

GRACE BIGELOW HOUSE

who always has the forward look
and that keen sense of the spiritual
values so necessary in education.

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INTRODUCTION

I remember when I first heard of St. Helena Island I also heard that the post-office was Frogmore. St. Helena sounded far off in the realm of historic and cultural memories. Frogmore was near and homely. When I came to know about the work that was going on in that little cut-off land, I fancied that the two names were well met. They seemed symbolic. Here was culture with its feet on the homely earth. Here was ideal work done in the byways.

It is well that Miss Cooley has told the story in this modest and interesting little book. And she has told it well. She lets us see the people as they are, their background, their ways, their needs, and their gradual improvement. We meet Rivena Wrotten and hear her story. We meet Aunt Jane Rivers and the effi-

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cient Mrs. Juno Washington. We see Violet, Pinkie, Aunt Tira, Soloman with his box, and Aunt Adelaide with her cord. *Dramatis personæ*, what a list, from Miss Towne who came down and began the story to the three-year-old Mira roasting sweet-potatoes in the ashes.

It is this concrete way of telling the story which makes it so interesting. We forget that we are studying sociology and pedagogy. But we are when we read this little book. It might serve as guide to all who have the heart and will to promote more wholesome and seemly ways of living among the people who dwell in the background. I do not see how a better book could be written on the subject of "Rural Sociology." We have the "laboratory method" in perfection. The school took, as one says, "the whole island as its class-room, its farm and shop." We can not mention all the methods

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of approach. The actual Community Class has been a fine feature. The way in which the health work was started and advanced is a model, including the development and aid of native helpers and the coöperation of the State Department. As an object lesson in "education for life" this little book has a unique value from cover to cover.

Miss Cooley lets us see how slowly and with what difficulty progress has been made. She does not say, but we can well understand what patience and wisdom have gone into all the good works, *quorum omnium pars magna fuit*. She and Miss House have been able to see the advances and how they came and are to come, from bunk to spring bed; dirt floor, plank floor, home-made rugs; rude shutters, glass, screens. But all has not been of and for the body. How could there be a book written about Negroes

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with religion left out? It is a beautiful glimpse of the pervading religious life that we get in the happy custom of "house blessing." When we read of the "house blessing" on the completion of Mr. Blanton's home all of us will wish that we had been there. School work, home work, farm work, and religion all go together on St. Helena.

So let us bespeak a wide reading of this little volume for the sake both of the story it tells and of the way the story is told.

J. H. DILLARD.

Charlottesville, Virginia.



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FOREWORD

IN the gallery of human struggle we should find place for pictures of the peasant woman tugging at the plow rope of the old serf lands of Europe, for the Indian woman carrying tepee and papoose, and for the Negro woman with the heavy cord tied round her hips to “give her strength” with her baby in her arms, and her bundle on her head.

But beside this last picture of the slave-hand of the cotton fields we must place another. Down the oyster shell roads of our Carolina Sea Islands where I write, down the roads of all the South, down the road of the history of a race, are coming young Negro girls who know nothing of the days of slavery except through the

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stories they hear by the fireplaces when mothers and grandmothers are reminiscing. The "young race" often make the older people impatient, older people who are black and older people who are white.

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No one who lives in the South and who may claim Southern friends can fail to appreciate the horrors of reconstruction as well as those of slavery; and to sense the reason for the separation between the two races. Time has tempered these things somewhat, and in our Southern communities many profess an appreciation of the old-time Negro. Yet comparatively few express similar interest in the young race, and not generally recognized is the nature of some of the mistakes made during the reconstruction period. These have much to do with this gulf between the generations which has come in to

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cast race feeling in new terms. Among Southern women the point of contact lies usually in the field of domestic service, and we hear complaint of the decline of the old cookery, the old courtesy, the old skill with spoon and tub and needle. There is the further charge that the younger Negroes have been ruined by book learning and with this comes irritation at the schools for Negroes, which are held responsible for the change.

To understand the girls now coming on, we must understand the generation that preceded them; a generation that had only childish memories or none at all of the war that meant emancipation. In this transitional period they skipped the lessons of hand skill which slavery taught. Their parents naturally recoiled from much that was soundest in their own experience because it had been bound up with the old

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order. "Work" to them had meant too often only daily drudgery under orders. To them, the whites stood for what it meant to be free; and the white race did not labor in the fields nor at the wash tubs. To dim, half-blinded eyes freedom meant leisure, education; and the records of the sixties bear witness to the eager throngs who besieged the schools opened on these Sea Islands after the Union forces had occupied them. Young and old, they came and we are told of slaves who held the books with gnarled, work-worn hands and set out at sixty to learn their A B C's. No wonder that, in this new march of the race, the young were eager to run before they could walk; to jump over all the stages through which a race must struggle to gain the hand skill and mind skill that give power. No wonder that the early northern teachers, in recoil against the skepti-

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cism about them on the part of Union army officers as well as Southerners, put all their strength and fervor into demonstrating that field hands could learn through books rather than through force; and that, once established, the purely academic character of the early Negro schools was carried to strange lengths. No wonder that this academic tradition has had to be overcome, no less than apathy and persistent antagonism toward any Negro education whatever, by the newer teaching which General Armstrong started at Hampton.

It is now twenty years since as emissaries of this new teaching we came from Hampton to St. Helena Island off Beaufort, South Carolina, to test out in a community of some 6,000 Negroes (with less than a hundred whites) the scheme of industrial training for which Hamp-

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ton and Tuskegee stand. Here in the days before the War between the States were the great plantations on which was grown the choicest product of the South—the long staple cotton. Here were the most recent victims of the slave trade of the seas, unlawfully smuggled in through the remote tidal rivers which interlace the islands that rim the Carolina coasts. Here, while the war went forward, these captured Islands became the first freed soil, and here soon after its close the field hands became small land owners. Here meanwhile on the central plantation of St. Helena, Penn School was opened as early as April, 1862, by Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia and her associate, Ellen Murray, who together labored among the Island people for forty years. Thereafter the work which they founded became a trust executed in the spirit if not the letter of the

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founders: for the succeeding twenty years have seen this oldest school for Negroes in the South revolutionized under the spur of those ideals of industrial training and community upbuilding associated with the names of Armstrong, Frisell, Buttrick, of Washington and Moton. Southern and Northern leaders, progressive educators and missionaries from India and Africa as well as America every year visit our Sea Island. They regard it as a laboratory where an experiment in rural education goes forward, perhaps as adventurous in its way as the early school of the sixties, and where the home acres of the islanders play as real a part in the curriculum as the class rooms themselves.

So it is that my acquaintance with the island has been as a social worker on horseback as well as a school principal at her desk; with the people on their farms as well as with children

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in the schoolrooms; with men and women, old and young alike.

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The race problem with us in America means more often than not that of the Negro—and, from the days when Booker T. Washington wrote his **UP FROM SLAVERY**, it has tended to mean that of the Negro man. But what of the Negro woman? The older fiction writers have, to be sure, delighted in depicting the Southern “mammy.” Uncle Remus has had his counterpart in Aunt Chloe and her kind; yet after all, these are types from the old days. What of the new?

Three generations have bridged the gap and it has been my rare fortune to have known them all, in sickness and in health, in sunshine and in struggle, since the days when in 1904 as a Vassar graduate, fresh from seven years at

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Hampton, I came among them. Since that first year, Grace Bigelow House has been my associate throughout, and beside us have worked a company of Hampton graduates and of islanders who have caught the gleam. Like our predecessors we have prized the friendship of the elders of a race who made a bridge—with their own bent backs and laboring muscles—between the old African and slavery days and the sixty difficult years of freedom. Penn School has helped train their daughters and grand-daughters for their part in an emancipation which has brought not only liberty and its gifts of the spirit, but a measuring up to the new standards of soil culture, housekeeping, sex relations, health.

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In this little book, I shall try to tell the story of the great transition from the “street” of

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slave days to the self-dependent households of freedom and of what this has meant to the women of the race.

In Part I I shall trace it in terms of that most ancient of women's concerns—the care of the sick; tell of the era of "drinking" and "rubbing" nostrums which in a Negro neighborhood was a natural sequence to herb doctors, as these were to African magic—and then, of the coming of better days with the organization of the midwives, the opening of a school clinic, ditching, a sanitary campaign against epidemic typhoid and the general mobilization of forces for health.

Next, let me introduce the reader to the whole range of parts played by women in the development of our island life—as singers and teachers, midwives, and church-workers, as farmers and managers of no mean ability—

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above all as home-makers mothering the generations that come on. The setting of home life concerns us in Part III. We shall follow the Negro householder in her progress from the one-room house, with its chimney of mud and sticks but with its hearth glowing, up through the "jump up" to the two-story house and the modern farm dwelling. We catch the stir of the canning clubs that are revolutionizing the diet of the cotton lands, and sense the domestic triumph when for three consecutive years, and in the midst of the boll weevil fight, St. Helena has been awarded prizes in the National Better Homes Campaign.

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But, above all, in the concluding section, let me bear witness to the new generation as they have carried themselves under conditions where they have had a chance to show the stuff that

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is in them. This may help others to see life as these girls have had to come at it, the lay of some of their chief obstacles, the way to overcome them. It may help others to understand that while the ancient occupations of women-folk remain their charge, the gauge that freedom set to these Negro women of the southern countrysides was not to become housemaids to be had for wages by city dwellers; but to become the home-makers and mothers, the cultural leaders and farm women for their own rural communities.



LANKEES

PART I
SATISFYING AFFLICTIONS

“When I see the doctor and the nurse starting out together to battle for a serious case, I wish there might come in our rural community—in all rural communities—the small hospital with its large opportunity of social service for the homes, and with its opportunity of adding a course of training for the girls, and so offering another outlet for ability that now feels it must go to the town.”

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ONE warm October day two white women were rowed over in the bateau which in those years served as a ferry boat between the town of Beaufort, South Carolina, and the Sea Islands that shut it off from the ocean. One of the largest of these islands bears the name of the mother of Constantine, like that other island leagues across the Atlantic on the African coast. We looked forward to our St. Helena not as a place of exile but as a field for work. The half-hour's row was the last lap in our long journey from "the North" and brought us to the low-lying shore of Ladies Island, which is the threshold to St. Helena. We climbed a flight of very rickety steps to a long narrow wharf extending far out to meet the

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ebb and flow of the tides. Marshes stretched on either hand with great pathways of the river running through them like ribbons, all satin in the bright sun, and lapping the very roots of the oaks.

“This is all very delightful, if it weren’t so hot,” I can hear Frances Butler say as we went up the little path to find our team. The rowers followed with our packages and brought up our trunks, for this is the land of many hands to help travelers. “But,” she added, “I hope neither one of us will ever have to take it alone or in trouble.” In just one month I had that journey to take “alone.” And in the interval we had come to know the depths of trouble, what in our homely island phrase is called a “satisfying affliction.” The islanders mean by this something complete, overwhelming; such as mortal sickness compounded by the isolation

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of the people and their utter lack of medical resources.

It was hot that first October. We had to learn how to live in an entirely new environment. And with settling an unfinished home, unpacking furniture, opening the new schoolhouse and supervising the placing of the new desks which awaited our arrival, we found our days too full, and our enthusiasm ran away with our strength. Three busy, very happy weeks passed. We had a willing helper in the kitchen, but one who needed to be told every detail of housework, except the making of baking powder biscuits, which she knew how to do well, and on which we very nearly subsisted. Everything we ate had to come out of a can, for Penn School then had no garden, no poultry, not even a cow. Well do I remember our last meal together at Hampton House. As we

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ate our scrambled eggs and baking powder biscuit we gazed through the open door of the library we had planned so long, and rejoiced that everything fitted and harmonized. It stood to us for the future of Penn School which with its long record of service as the first of the schools for Negroes in the South, was now come under Hampton leadership. We talked of plans for industrial training, many of which have since come true: agriculture, housekeeping for girls, trades to help a rural community hold its boys. Everything seemed possible and probable. Frances had large brown eyes, and I see them now as she talked that night—full of light and a great eagerness. It was as if there were a fire burning within. In reality there was, and it was a consuming fire, for she was not strong enough to meet the rigor of

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those first few weeks in which we had already made our acquaintances with "the fever."

The fever was very "rapid" that autumn, and I had tried giving quinine to some of the neighbors whom we had found suffering with it. I had always been interested in nursing. All during college days I had said I should never teach; I wanted to be a trained nurse. I even had flights of imagination to the possibility of being a physician; but the hospital training should come first, as I felt I should ask my father for no further education. On a college professor's salary he had educated six children and given us all the best. My youth prevented my entering a hospital for the first year after graduation and my inheritance from my father prevented me ever giving up teaching once I had started. But my love for all things medi-

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cal was a gift indeed for those first days on the island. With the love went a certain skill that usually comes with deep interest in a subject, and a certain kind of confidence that comes with determination and endurance. I had need for these things, for the fever struck Hampton House that night and Frances Butler was its victim. I knew nothing of death. I had come close to it but once in all my life, and then the responsibility had been shared with many others. But here on St. Helena we had had no time to make the acquaintance of the fifty or so white people who lived on the island. Most of them customarily left it for the summer months with their heat and sickness and few had returned. It was a nine-mile drive each way through the heaviest sand to Fort Fremont —a remnant of the Spanish-American War, located at Land's End—well named, I thought,

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as I waited for medical aid. But to send to Beaufort meant a six-mile drive with a river to cross, so when I found the army doctor would respond to the call, I placed my dependence on him and I never regretted it. He willingly drove the weary miles one night to arrive at two in the morning. We had to send to Savannah for a trained nurse. All the medicine and sick-room accessories were in Beaufort, and were sent for by that slow process of wagon to the ferry, and then the bateau which ran on no regular schedule across to the town. We did not have a refrigerator, and as ice was a necessity, I took one of the packing boxes and filled it with sawdust, and the ice was brought from the town as well as all other things for the sick-room. One of my most vivid memories of that week is the never-ending going up and down the stairs through the day and through

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the night to the improvised ice box, lifting the heavy top, digging down into the sawdust for the ice, chipping off what seemed like gold, and carrying it to the sick-room.

As I looked out of our staircase window on my many pilgrimages that last day, I saw one of the old Negro women sitting on the wood-pile. She knew of the shadow. She wanted me to know that some one was there ready to help if there was help that could be given. I have never known who she was. That day I was too numb to go even so far as the woodpile or to ask her to come to the porch. But I was glad to see her. She seemed a link with a world that was becoming very unreal. And I felt the kindness of that presence, and have often thought of her and silently thanked her.

The struggle, and it was a splendidly brave one, ended on the night of November first, All

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Saints Day. I have always liked to remember one of the last things Frances said, "It is all right. I'm so very glad we came here!" Then came the long journey alone and in trouble, back down the oyster-shell road, across the river, through Beaufort, all the way to Boston and out to the home in Arlington.

This was my tragic introduction to the health problem of St. Helena. That winter, Miss Butler's post was taken by Grace Bigelow House and together for nineteen years we have thrown in our lot with the Islanders. The next two winters seemed to call me especially to homes where there was illness, and I came to know my neighbors through their afflictions. At that time there was no doctor except the army doctor, and no nurse on our island of 6,000 Negroes. The people either did nothing, or else carried their sick to Lands End or

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to Beaufort or to Parris Island for medical attention, often waiting till death was almost certain before taking that step.

My neighbors were many of them—as I came to know—but three or four generations removed from the African village. There all the superstition, all the dramatic element, all the love of rhythm found in the race is appealed to by the witch doctor who has a large practice among his primitive people. In plantation days in the South the slaves' health was cared for by their owners. Often the relationship was a close one, and then the Negroes were given comforts as well as medicines. The field hands of the islands, however, rarely came in contact with the white people and there was little of that personal interest. So here, more than on the main land, the old ideas continued and the old superstitions prevailed. Midwives

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have always held an important position in the life of the race, both in Africa and on the plantations, where they were given some training by the family physician since the Negro babies were valuable to their owners. Where, as with us, the rural Negroes were less under the eyes of their masters, the old customs held on, and the herb doctors took the place of the witch doctors of Africa.

The next step in the period following emancipation was from herbs to patent medicines bought from the agent who drives about from house to house or from the shelves of our stores that supply everything from a paper of pins to a kitchen stove. This was the natural step for rural communities and has been the one most difficult to get past. The alluring titles and promises, and the fact that there is no doctor's fee added to the cost of the bottle, account for

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the popularity of medicines that often do more harm than good.

On one of my visits, I found a long row of empty bottles sitting on the little shelf beside an old woman. She had "drunk nine dollars and fifty cents wut ob medicine," she proudly informed me, and this last kind was "to cool de pain." When she died all the bottles were taken to the grave, a usual Island custom. Her son was seeing to it that his old mother did not lack medicine, but in life she had never seen a doctor.

My patients grew in number, and for a school teacher I was kept busy enough. A note brought in by a child saying the mother had "intergestion pepsy" would take us to a home where we could combine visiting child and parent, for country teachers can do little unless they know the family background. On the

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Island nothing ever aches or is sore. The head or the foot, as the case may be, is "sick." Aunt Elsie's sick foot kept me at work for weeks. She called it a "jew boil," meaning dew, for she believed that the early morning dew had caused it. She told me one morning after I had left a cathartic pill, "that one pill did not remove the bowel." Fortunately! Not infrequently one of the children would come to the office to ask, "Has yo' any medicine fo' chillun?" "Drinkin'" or "rubbin'" as the case might be, for those were the most called for.

A very general custom among Southern Negroes is to send to the doctor for medicine. It is a custom that easily grows up in a rural community where the distances are so great and transportation so difficult, but it does not always help the patient, for symptoms are not

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easily described by even the best educated. And yet wonderful skill has often been shown by the rural physician in diagnosing the disease at a distance, and I've often wondered how he did it. For a layman like myself the only resource was to respond in person, more often than not on pony back.

Among our school workers should be numbered the horses that have made possible our visits up island and down. First came Community Maud, then Jubilee and Come-Again, and finally our native Island ponies, Sunshine and Wonder, who still travel the roads. My saddle bag in those early days more often than not bulged with old linen needed for the new baby and perhaps a mason jar full of soup for old Aunt Riah.

Community Maud early came to know the plantation paths that led to the little homes

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where the sick looked forward to my coming. When Mrs. Juno said one day in the Community Class, "De people dey recognizes Missus Cooley, 'cause she slashes about dis Island," I began to feel less like a stranger in their midst. One day I well remember leaving Community Maud outside, as usual untied for she was a gifted community worker and sensed her share in the work. That day, however, I evidently stayed too long and I came out to find no horse. There was nothing to do but to walk home—about four miles. It is always a good thing to walk on the Island! It makes one realize better what the children must come through to Penn School, for all our children walk, no matter how far away their homes. The walk took me through the wood where the yellow jessamine trailed its way over the bushes and up into the trees, where I met the

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wild iris growing along the edges of great basins of water which I had to jump and wade through, just as the children had to do every day. The jessamine was almost over and there were golden bells lying on the wood path. I realized then as I do again and again the great compensations of rural work.

And Community Maud? She had dashed straight home to her stable where one of the boys had jumped in the saddle and come out to meet me, which shortened the walk by about a mile, and incidentally gave the deserter more work to do!

My "doctoring" was all most simple, and it usually began with some fresh air. The people do what they can for the sick, but air is usually kept out of the sick-room as rather a dangerous commodity and also because there is rarely enough "beddin'." The wooden shutters make

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a room seem pitch black until you get used to it. I usually threw the shutter wide open the first thing, and some one would say, "Miss Cooley, she like de air!" I would tell them it was God's medicine and better than any doctor's!

I could only give such medicines as I had seen my mother give to her large family of children, but that with out bright sunshine and fresh air did seem to do wonders. And I loved the work. It was a natural first step in trying to do the double share of work which I felt had been left to me by Miss Butler's going.

Because of it I was saved many a lonesome time, for the days were full to the brim. One night I wrote to my mother, "This has been a day for crossing bridges. I don't know what is the matter, but I am depressed. I feel as lonely as though I were alone in the world. I sup-

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pose people think I am too busy to be lonely and to be wishing that I could fly home. I am, usually, but this has been a bad day. Fortunately I shall soon be asleep and tomorrow will have a different look to it! I have two blind women, one old lame woman, one old woman with a boil on her foot, and one destitute crazy girl to look after on my immediate list for help. When I get out among them I shall forget this dark cloud on the interior." I find no other reference to homesickness in all my letters (which my mother saved in bundles marked by the year and which have proved a treasure trove in recapturing the experiences and feelings of those years). I am sure the home visits among the sick were the best medicine!

Bella Legare, alone, was enough to drive away the worse possible attack of homesickness!

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She was entirely blind, and crippled besides. Her legs were drawn up so that no power could straighten them. She spoke so cheerfully and was so glad we came that our hearts would ache for her because we could do so little. She had been blind five years and sick six, she told us, but her voice had no note of whine in it. She lay in bed all day, the wooden shutters drawn to keep out the cold, for as usual there were too few bedclothes. Her husband was a sad-looking individual who acted as both cook and housekeeper, with the help of two little children they were trying to keep in school. He brought in a little chimneyless lamp for us, which lighted up the general dreariness, but added so much smoke I can smell it as I write. I asked Bella if she was warm enough. "Oh, yes," she said, "'cep' when it's col', and den I feels de coverin' too light. But it will

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git warmer." When I asked her about her food, she said, "Yes, I has de appetite, an' dat's what keep me up." I wondered what she had to eat, for they were "dessicute." The husband explained, with a pathetic wave of the hand, "I farms some, but I has no crittur or nuttin' to help dese han's. An' when de chillun in de school, I mus' stay right yere." And I could see that he should.

We happened upon my other blind "patient" one day as we were driving across Eustis Plantation on Ladies Island. We had no idea any one lived in the little old house in the field, not a bit of whitewash on it, not a bit of paint, no chimney, not a sign of life about it. We were struck by the fact that day that smoke was coming out of the door!

When we looked in, we found a young woman crouching over a bit of fire built on the

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floor. Some sand was under the fire, but why the house had not burned will always be a mystery to me. She was quite alone. Her name was Violet, and she had no near of kin to care for her—only an aunt by marriage living on the same plantation.

Violet needed care, for she was stone blind. And she was quite attractive. We found that she had had one child. What was to protect her? Her ignorance was the darkest I had ever met.

A year later, when we found that she was to have another child, we decided that she really must go to the county poorhouse, a clean if dreary place, with an evidently kind woman in charge. Violet would never see the dreariness. She would be fed; she and the community would be safe.

We made plans accordingly, and worked out

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every detail. Violet and the aunt who was her only "Kinnery," seemed perfectly willing, but when we went down to take her, there was no moving Violet. She would not stir from her own fire sand! And there in the background was the aunt. A cog in the machinery of our providence had slipped loose that morning. I was to find out the deep-seated feeling in the minds of the Negro people that they ought to take care of their own. The neighbors had been talking, and the aunt was adamant. "She a bit mindless. She ain't for go, for she al'ays ben on dis place an' she belong yere." Argument was useless. So I said to the old auntie, "It is just because she is a bit mindless that she needs protection. It is all wrong that she should live here by herself, and it is all wrong for her children. They have no chance. If we leave her, will you

promise to take her into your own house and let her live there always?" She said she would, and she did, that very morning, and Violet lived safely till her death several years later.

The only reminder now of that long-ago morning is a little bright-faced child, adopted by a family on a near-by plantation, who will always give you the wave of her hand, a happy smile. But when she tries to speak you hear only a strange jargon of sound, for Violet's daughter was born deaf.

We were to learn more about the "mindless." While Violet was, I think, stupid only because of her total lack of sight and opportunity, Pinkie—as we learned after her first visit—was insane. She appeared at **Hampton House** one early evening, passed straight by Mary and stood like a picture framed in the door of our dining-room. Tall, very dark, with skin like

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satin, slender, her shapely head tied up in a white cotton cloth, her skirt short to her ankles, and barefooted. Like a flash she took us and everything in the room in at a glance, and then quietly sat down at one side of the room.

She seemed to have no particular request. She wanted to stay all night, and yet she told me she lived on Ladies Island and had walked from the ferry and had children at home! Finally I told her she must go, for it was not right for her to be on the road late, and she started as swiftly as she had come in, and passed out into the night. But somehow I could not feel that she had really gone. The little group of teachers then lived in a small portable cottage we had put up near Hampton House. We went over there, and there sat Pinkie in one of the rooms, the teachers mystified and a bit frightened, too. This time we

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saw her to the gate, and there was no return that evening.

But we had not seen the end of the problem she brought in that dark night. She was always appearing, from "day clean" till long after sunset, and while she seemed perfectly harmless, it gave us a start to see her suddenly standing at the bedroom door, or looking in at us when we were eating. She always seemed to be right there without coming, for she walked like a deer, and went barefoot. At length came the decision that she must go to Columbia to the "Silent"—as our state hospital for the insane is called by the Islanders. And while Uncle Gabriel was loth to give up his efforts to care for her, he finally consented.

The Island attitude toward illness no less than toward insanity is bound up with superstition, as Miss House found when she went in to

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see one of the older women who had an affliction which she said "no medical doctor cayn' cure." "I had dis affliction before," she said, "and I ben to Parris Island doctor and all de doctors, an' dey say it could do no good."

"But you can tell me what the sickness is like?"

"Hump, hump!" shaking her head, "dey is some illness come from God, and some come from man!"

"Do you think this sickness came from God?" asked Miss House.

The little room was dark, the little old woman lay on a very neat bed, well-cared for, evidently, but quite weak. "No," she whispered, "No, no! Dishyuh sickness came from man."

"Do you think some one wished some evil on you?"

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“Yes,” came back the expected answer in a whisper.

“Some one of your kin?”

“No,” emphatically. “But I couldn’t tell oonuh who it was. I always did work for myself, an’ dey didn’t like it. But I’ve had some good relief since Monday. I went to the colored doctor an’ she gib me some medicine dat gib me good relief.”

“Was it drinking medicine?”

“Yes, and someting mo’. She pray wid me, an’ I pray too. It is t’rough de Lord de relief done come.”

Whatever the spell, it had been broken and prayer, substituted for old incantations, had done its work for the weary old soul who had been in the hands of the “bewitchment.” And this happened only last year!

Throughout my doctoring days life was a bit

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complicated because I was also trying to run a school. Between nursing visits and calls, there was the inspection of the new dormitory we were building; a discussion perhaps with the white contractor (today our buildings are altogether the work of Negro builders) as to the right place to put the thimble in the chimney; then a visit to the barn and a chance to learn more about mules and horses and boys; then class-room questions; then accounts—and how I hated the week that brought them around, for when they did balance they showed a debit and the need of my stopping the much more interesting work I was doing to get to work on “appealing” letters. All sorts of things could happen in an hour, and it is a miracle my head was not addled! Small wonder that I welcomed a visit which brought a real doctor to Hampton House. Dr. Mary Harley, then one

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of the resident physicians at Vassar College, came to our Island. So interested was she in this part of our work that she suggested we ask the sick to come to the school and let her help them. Thirty came.

The outstanding case was Aunt Mary Green who had run a potato fork far into her foot. We had her brought down in the school carriage—an event in her life. When Dr. Harley lanced her foot there was not one moan, and the thankfulness and assurance that all was well had much to do, no doubt, with the surprisingly quick recovery that was made. That day the lame was made to walk, for after the few weeks of dressing, "ole bruk-foot Mary," as she called herself, could travel anywhere, complaining only when "de wedduh ain't suit de foot."

Mackie was another of Dr. Harley's patients.

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But his was a case which no physician could heal. We had run across him in a little home taking care of a baby sister for his mother, a widow, who was at the oyster factory where she could earn about fifty cents a day. He could walk only a few steps and then he would fall down. He had begged me for medicine to cure him, and I had suggested that he find some one who could bring him to Penn School to learn to make baskets with the class. He appeared and took his first lesson, and as we had the basketry class on Tuesdays in those days, I did not expect to see him again until the following week. As I went over to the school the next day, there lay Mackie under the casina bush. He told me he had come in a cart half the way and walked the rest of the way, "a short cut, muh."

"But there is no basketry till next Tuesday," I said.

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"I knows, muh, but I come to learn." And I could see just how he had come! A few steps on his poor withered legs, and then a sort of creeping on his knees, using both hands. We put him in the primary room and there he stayed, the happiest child in school, but always I wondered if we ought to allow it, for transportation by cart was uncertain, and often he brought himself part of the way.

Dr. Harley advised crutches, and after we made them the boy had a better chance. But progress was slow, and after going through three grades, Mackie slipped out and was soon lost in the tide that carried many a boy to Savannah. Lost, yes, as far as we know. But at least he had something for a few years, and had home conditions been better I believe he would have held his own.

From the start, we had determined to de-

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velop nursing work on the Island. Dr. Harley's visit strengthened our determination, and a piling up of difficult cases brought it about in our third year. I recall a desperately sick baby, whose needs went far beyond my knowledge or common sense, and a little boy who was suffering with earache and a bad wound in his foot from an ax. He had taken an old nail to his ear because it had itched on the inside; and they had used water and cobwebs, the usual remedy, for the bleeding foot.

I gave my patients into the skilled hands of the "Doctor Nurse" with regret for myself and congratulations for them. Her first case was a little baby, Isaac by name, almost dead when he was brought in. His twin, Rebecca, had died at birth. I believe both could have been saved with proper nursing in time! From the start, therefore, preventive work seemed as im-

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portant as the actual nursing. How else were we to get hold of the baby question in all of its larger meaning? The results of syphilis were found among school children, and a few adult cases came to the nurse's office for treatment. All the cases discovered were traced to city life, and this added fuel to our fire of enthusiasm to conserve the rural life on the Island and build it up so that it should offer a future for our boys and girls. The terrific meaning of the "sins of the fathers" came to me for the first time and made school teaching more vitally than ever a question that concerned itself with the entire family from the unborn baby to the parents who did not come to the schoolhouse.

Smallpox also knocked at our school gates. Our predecessors, the founders of the Penn School in the 60's, Miss Towne and Miss Mur-

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ray, had known it well in the earlier years. Miss Towne had had training in Johns Hopkins hospital and had fought a fearful epidemic that had swept over the Island—years before. One of the boys came to school one morning with a rash that aroused my suspicions. We called Miss Murray who was still teaching in the school, after forty years' service, and who had long experience with the Island diseases. She at once pronounced it the old scourge. The boy's mother had been opening an old trunk and did not know how long it had been since its contents had seen the light of day! Smallpox germs, according to the theory of the doctor from Beaufort called in to vaccinate the school, had bided their time. Fortunately the disease did not spread, but the single case led to a yearly vaccination in Penn School, and we found that half the children according to their

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parents had "bad flesh." Begging letters came every day to omit "my child" for the above reason, in the distribution of the vaccine. But "Doctor Nuss" managed to transform their fear into anticipation of a new treat, and soon I found children begging to go to her office, and on the road would come the question, "Ain't you goin' to vaccilate me to-day?"

There followed first-aid lessons to boys and girls, and to the mothers and grandmothers in the Community Class; talks on social hygiene to the girls; a similar course given by one of the men school teachers to the boys; hot lunches provided through the cooking class; and we felt that we were at least hacking out a path that might finally clear a way through the brush of untoward health conditions.

Education mixed with care has in the years since been the nurse's daily program, and we

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have been coming along to the stage of paid visiting nursing. That, however, is one of the things which the boll weevil and the Island poverty have deferred.

A native Island physician finally took his place beside our school nurse in the fight against disease. York Bailey, a Penn School graduate who had gone to Howard University to study medicine, came back to the Island to practice. When I see the doctor and the nurse starting out together to battle for a serious case, I wish there might come in our rural community—in all rural communities—the small hospital with its large opportunity of social service for the homes, and with its opportunity of adding a course of training for the girls, and so offering another outlet for ability that now feels it must go to the town. There is splendid economy in fighting illness at the beginning, seeing that

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proper care is given and building up healthy bodies that resist its ravages. The rural hospital with physicians and nurses, with the vision of a whole community physically fit, could be a more effective health center than a rural school can ever hope to be.

An outbreak of typhoid fever one summer led us to organize our first health campaign. There were twenty-two cases and five deaths, and we were faced with an epidemic. We turned at once to the State Health Department, and, as always, they were prompt and helped us not only to map out the campaign but to carry it through. We decided to make one plantation a sanitary district, and we chose Corner Plantation where there had been five cases and two deaths. Dr. F. M. Routh of the South Carolina Board of Health was stationed at the school and worked with us for two weeks. We

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aimed to inoculate as many as possible and to carry on publicity work. We used the epidemic as a lever to get at general health conditions.

Few of the homes had outhouses of any kind; fewer had driven wells. We made a map of the plantation, indicating every road and home, and on the map we stuck pins as they were won by each family. A red pin for inoculation—that was red for blood. A yellow pin for the erection of a “sanitary privy”—yellow for sunshine in the healthier home. A blue pin for waterworks, when the driven well, twenty feet deep (this having been the depth required by the state board) was an accomplished fact.

All the families applied promptly for inoculation. It was akin to vaccination. All except one, that is—whose conversion comes later in this story.

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The “sanitarie” were simply wooden boxes, fly-proof, made according to a pattern that had been used in Virginia. A few made the boxes for themselves, but most of them were made in the school carpenter shop at a cost of 55 cents per box. A few built shelters over them, but most of them were placed in the “bush,” sometimes with palmetto branches for a roof. They were movable, so the soil as well as the family was benefited.

One night I met Solomon carrying his box home from the shop on his head. His house, just whitewashed, its blue trimming shining in the sun, stood on a little rise of ground, the tide river sweeping in on one side of it. The next day I found, to my surprise, that he had planted his “sanitary” squarely in front of his house. His feelings were like the glow in an

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old New England homestead which has installed an enameled bathtub upstairs. He greeted me proudly: "Ain't she pretty!"

The spirit of the doctor from the state board had much to do with the success of our campaign. Here was a Southerner, a South Carolinian, who quietly went from home to home explaining and teaching, showing every kindness and courtesy, and winning the love and respect of the whole group. I remember after supper one night his saying that he was going to have one more talk with that single neighbor who stood out against the school in this matter of health measures. At the Praise House the doctor had usually been met with this neighbor's statement that we were going against God, that the fever was God's method of punishing his people, and if we went against it, He would punish more! Patience and perseverance won

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out against him as far as his neighbors were concerned. They installed "sanitaries" and wells. We had been able to make the map perfect with the exception of one house. We talked about this wherever we could. We posted the map in conspicuous places. We spread abroad how much better it would be were we able to send in a 100 per cent report to Columbia. The idea caught the imagination of the people. At least it must have reached that little home so isolated on the map among all the others splendidly decorated with red, yellow and blue pins. One morning I found our neighbor waiting for me when I came down to my desk at seven o'clock. With many apologies he announced that he had seen the light. He wanted me to send word to the doctor, the honor of whose visit to his home had evidently influenced him. So the campaign on

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Corner Plantation became 100 per cent perfect! As he walked out of the school gate, his dark red sweater bringing into relief the dark skin of his face, it struck me that his capitulation perhaps meant more in the long perspective than the red, yellow, and blue pins that we could soon push in on the little square that stood for his home on the map.

But I must confess that the "sanitaries" and the driven wells with pumps near the house did not spread rapidly all over the Island! They reached out on Fuller Plantation, next to Corner, which was severely visited with typhoid too. And an occasional family on a far-away plantation caught the notion, but that was all. No experience could more fully show the need for consecutive disease prevention work, not merely under pressure of an epidemic, but during every month of the year. Another argu-

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ment for a rural hospital to become a focus for the contagion of health.

In more recent years Penn School has co-operated in community investigations of hook-worm and pellagra, of tuberculosis and filaria. It has proved to be a good health center too! When the state sent down a representative of the Tuberculosis Commission, she found that we had no case of that disease uncared for. This, she said, was the only community so reported in the state. We all added to our limited knowledge of medical subjects through the experts who thus visited our shores. We had never heard of filaria! Dr. Francis of the United States Public Health Service was making a survey of the coast towns and communities to discover the cause of the increase. We learned that its common name is elephantiasis, that it is caused by a mosquito, culex by name,

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and that no trace of it could be found in the blood until after nine P. M. Where it spent its day was a question unanswered. We all went to night school that night at nine o'clock, and the doctor took a blood specimen of thirty-seven boys and girls, men and women.

Every one behaved splendidly, only one girl shrinking when the doctor made the cut with his knife-like needle. As one of the boys said, "He ain't play with you, he cut!" I had it done too, first one, so that I might know just how it did feel. Results were all negative. A clean bill of health for St. Helena as far as elephantiasis goes!

It must not be supposed that better health has been brought to the community solely by "foreigners," as all strangers are called on the Island. I have told how through the coming of experts we have gained ground over even

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the "satisfying afflictions," but to complete the story I must tell how native resources have been strengthened and how they have counted. There has always been that group of women who have been the obstetrical nurses—the "middlers." They had inherited their trade—handed down from generation to generation with little thought that it was all-important for the new life to begin right! Probably white doctors had taught the old maumuhs in the plantation days, though how far this training was given to the field hands, I do not know. Negro children then meant money in the white owner's pocket. But sixty years is a long call for any instruction to last, and many hap-hazard methods had come into vogue.

Our nurse had given instruction to the women in the Community Class, but that reached only a few "middlers," perhaps half a

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dozen. It seemed a bit casual to go on year after year with no birth or death records, so I had a set of cards printed and placed them in the hands of the doctor, the nurse, and each of the Island ministers.

The following year, South Carolina passed a law that all births and deaths must be recorded. Under the new law all midwives were compelled to register, and a course of twelve lessons was required in order to obtain a certificate to practice. Our school was used as a center, and the nurse appointed to give the course. We wondered how the women would like this new measure. We found great enthusiasm: forty-two enrolled at the first meeting. This includes Wassa, Ladies, and Palawanna Islands, as well as St. Helena. Twelve lessons only are required by the state, and yet for three years the midwives have come regu-

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larly to their monthly meeting, and not one is yet satisfied that she knows all that the "Doctor Nuss" can pass on to her.

I attended the first meeting. An interesting crowd had gathered, grandmothers of eighty, mothers from about fifty up. Some had come from Coffins Point, some from Lands End, and every point of the Island and the near-by islands was represented. One note was struck that afternoon. The "middlers'" work was recognized by the state; it had become a profession.

Uniforms had never been a part of the trade, and I said to the nurse, "We can't go too fast, but I hope they can get into uniforms before the end of the year." Two months later I attended another meeting and there sat the same group of women, most of them transformed by blue nurses' dresses, white aprons and caps.

No, the nurse had not spoken about it, but the professional note had been struck and they had begun to think of themselves as skilled workers.

The uniform helped tremendously in *esprit de corps*. When I was out on Scott to see one of the home acres, Aunt Rivenna came to me saying, "Please may I speak wid you private," and she told how a neighbor who was not a member of the class has practiced midwifery on her plantation. "And yo know dat's against de law and will bring all of we down." A few of the younger women began to join the class. It is not always easy for the older midwives to accept the younger ones, but the nurse and the class spirit soon melted suspicion and antagonism. And Baby Day, of which I shall tell in a later chapter, claims the interest of all.

Health values have been bound up in other

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local measures, and in these we have enlisted men, women and children. Thus we found ourselves deep in ditching! It became the war cry both in our fight against the mosquito and in promoting a food crop to compete with cotton. I personally inspected, encouraged, and urged till I could see ditches in my sleep. I even went so far as to do a little digging! Health instruction was carried to the county schools by our nurse, but too little of that can as yet be done, for lack of time and means. And Clean-up Week came to stay.

“Doctor Nuss” started off the Clean-up Week campaign in the Midwives’ Class, in the Community Class, and among the school children, and reports were called for by each classroom teacher every day, the women bringing in theirs at the class meetings. Olivia Young, who lives far down on Coffins Point Plantation,

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and who had to miss the meeting, sent her report by mail, and I quote it in full as it gives a picture of many a home on the Island during the week dedicated to Home Betterment all over the South where there are Negroes. This Clean-up Week is one of the creative ideas for which the South is indebted to Booker T. Washington.

"I have raked up all the yards, gather up all the old rubishes carried them to the trash pile and burn them. Have painted the wall and ceiling inside of house, remove and dusted all the rugs and put them back in their places, have cleaned the flowers yard and set out more flowers, have washed and cleaned up all my heaviest bedclothes and laid them aside, clean out the poultry coop and put in clean straw, washed and iron curtains and hang them up

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again and have dusted all the rooms and furniture."

Literally hundreds of clean-ups are reported each year: One of the mothers who said, "I had the yard clean up very nice and in the house very nice to meet the great Easter morning," expressed, all unknowingly perhaps, one of the fundamental realities that a rural school is trying to pass on to its people.

PART II
THE BANDAGE OF LOVE

“The old women who have crept out from the shadow of slavery, whose mothers and grandmothers were brought from the tropical sunshine of an eastern continent, have kept the fire which Freedom lit with its torch glowing on their mud hearths. For it has been in their homes that they have guarded the embers of a smoldering liberty.”

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WE were driving behind Jubilee and Come-
Again along a road which was bordered by a
thick cassina hedge. We call it Christmas
berry down here on the Carolina Sea Islands
for its bright red berries come at Christmas
time. Its sparkling green leaves, the occasional
gold-gleaming cluster of jessamine, the red
cardinal or brown thrasher adding color and
song, always bring to mind the old spiritual we
often sing:

I look all around me
It look so shine
I ask de Lord
If all were mine.
Yes, ebery time I feels de sperit
Movin' in muh heart
I will pray.

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Suddenly, through a break in the hedge we had our first sight of Aunt Adelaide. She poised a large basket on her head, her skirts were above her ankles, tied below the hips by a stout cord. "And why the cord, Aunt Adelaide?"

"Dat's what gibs me strength," she answers, and whatever the reason, it is a custom that has come down from the long-long-ago. She held a pipe tightly in her teeth, and carried the heavy Island hoe on one shoulder.

All day, since "dayclean," she had worked in her fields. In slavery days the hands often walked long distances from their cabins to their work, and today on our Island the people often cultivate fields that they have bought or have inherited far away from their homes. As Aunt Adelaide swung down the road, tall, straight, strong, we followed her to the little home sur-

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rounded by yuccas, where on the open hearth she would cook her simple evening meal.

The old women who have crept out from the shadow of slavery, whose mothers and grandmothers were brought from the tropical sunshine of an eastern continent, have kept the fire which Freedom lit with its torch glowing on their mud hearths. For it has been in their homes that they have guarded the embers of a smoldering liberty.

There is nothing like the open fireplace. As we travel over the Island toward nightfall, we see the firelight flash through the open doors. One door of the house is usually open until bed-time, and this fresh air is what saves the poor people. Fresh air and sunshine are the compensation for the many things they lack. Miss Towne, who founded Penn School on St. Helena in the 60's, has said the reason a door

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was left open in the old days was to guard against shutting out the Good Spirit, a fear that had been transported from Africa. Surely this is a tradition worth transplanting and worth preserving.

To-day Aunt Adelaide is an old woman—nearly twenty years have passed since our first glimpse of her through the cassina hedge. She can no longer carry that heavy hoe and make good crop. Her story of growing old is the story of hundreds of men and women, white and black in rural communities. The children grew up—married. Their children came, crops grew poorer. The old mother received less and less as the days came on when she needed more and more. The house began to need repairs; no money, and so it began to settle; the sills rotted, and finally broke down altogether; the chimney fell. I rode Wonder to the door

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one day and found the old house propped up with great poles cut in the near-by wood, and Aunt Adelaide cooking her grits in a pot on a fire made on the floor in one corner of the room. "Oh, yes," said she, "de smoke mek me cry, and when de win' blow I scare and run out to de neighbor."

Penn School rode home that night very thoughtfully. Some months before the story of our school for Negro boys and girls had been told to a group of students at the Fermata School in Aiken, and the picture of those radiantly happy girls preparing to go home for Christmas holidays flashed before me. I knew they would want to help if they knew about the little old home and the little old woman going down together. And so back at my desk a letter caught our one-mail-a-day. The girls responded and a telegram came promising cash

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for brick and the lumber. The materials finally reached our shop, where the boys cut the boards to measure, and they were carted out to the plantation. Like a human picture puzzle, for these boards seemed to have a personality as gifts from that group of girls at Aiken, a new home was quickly pieced together, the little chimney was built, and once more Aunt Adelaide was established.

The story of this little house will go on through many years. Set on old palmetto logs, it does not belong to the land, but to the school, so when Aunt Adelaide dies it can be moved to some other acre where a man or woman left stranded by the cruelty of old age can be made comfortable. It will be a movable Old Folks Home. Any of our old people would rather live as we found Aunt Adelaide than go to the Poor House. In fact there were not enough old

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people who would go to Beaufort County Poor House to warrant its being kept up, and it has been closed.

As I sat by Aunt Adelaide's new fireplace in her little new house we talked over the old days. In the shadows I could see the background of the present. Under slavery her mother had been a "midder." Her master, Gabriel Capers, had sent her off to Charleston to learn "de Trade." "My mammy ben eddi-cated, but I ain't hab none. Dat is I hab only six days of schoolin'." "And why?" I asked. "My parents gib me to an uncle and aunt and dey wuk me. I mus' tend cotton and clean yaa'd, 'n' all dem kin' a ting. But dey too rough, an' I leave dem an' run back to Capers. Den cum Freedom an' I wuk fo' me one, an' I wuk ha'd an' I buy me own land. Den I marries. I marry stranger f'om Port Royal,

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but de odder women tek' him away f'om me, an' I lives alone. Yes, I de mudder of twelve born children, but I ain't raise but fo'."

"How could you support your children," I asked quietly, as the old woman paused and forgot everything in the memory of those eight babies that she couldn't raise. "I ben strong ooman. I wuk fo' meself wid me han'. I ben ma'sh-cuttin' ooman. I go in de ma'sh and cut and carry fo' myself. I glad fo' dis house," she added. "All de tings my mudder taught me to do to keep he'l't'y, I ain't able fo' do in dat old house." And I could see the old mid-wife of slavery days handing down to her children as well as to her patients some of the lessons she had learned "up dere in Charleston."

Many stories live on at St. Helena. The old people remember what their parents and grandparents told them and in their turn hand

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down the experiences of the race. By my fire, as I write at Ndulamo, stands an old man. "Twenty years old when Gun Shoot," he tells me. Oh, yes'm, he can remember hearing about the landing of those "African people." His father's father came with them, and they were landed down there at Lonesome Hill. Many died, and many ran away, and "I spec dey ran back to Africa." The picture of that early home life comes clearly from Uncle Sam as he stands by the fire—a rugged old man, and still able to beat many a younger one at his work. He tells of the row of slave cabins, always calling it "de Street." "When de morning star shine, de driver blow he horn, and de wim-men mus' get up 'fore dat an' cook dey brek-wus'." There we have it. Women first! "Den all go to de wood, pick up a stick, throw him in de yaa'd for fire at Bighouse. Den tek

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pail and go to de fiel' wid hoe in de hand. De overseer gib tree tasks ($\frac{3}{4}$ acre) to each one. When time for eat, we sit right down in de row an' eat an' den back to wuk." "And what did you have for your breakfast?" I ask. "Oh, we has hominy, or flour an' oshtuh, or crab an' hominy. Such like as dat."

This was the primitive beginning. At least it had one value, that of team work. For the field was full of hands as well as cotton, and now the great disaster to many a country home comes because of the isolation and loneliness of much of the field work.

Only the babies could interrupt the routine of the "Street" in cotton lands. With the arrival of a little one, the mother was excused from the field for a month, and then for three months more she was given a lighter task in the field. The old women on the plantations be-

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came the nurses, or Maumas. While the parents were off in the cotton rows they cooked the food in a big iron pot for all the children. An older brother or sister carried the nursing baby to the field, and the mother would sit down in the row. And "when de baby done suck, I carries him back to de Street."

These little baby tenders, and their mothers and grandmothers, were field hands. Some had lessons in sewing or cooking but as with other plantation crafts such as basket-making, carpentry, laundering, blacksmithing—only a picked few as boys or girls had the valuable industrial training of a well-managed plantation. It is easy to see—as I shall bring out more fully later—why work continued to mean slavery to them and even when Chloe might have been a wonderful cook or laundress, once Emancipation came, her one idea for Clarissa

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was an education that meant going to school and away from all drudgery, the chance to wear pretty clothes any day in the week, and as her utmost goal, the Latin and algebra offered by the early Negro schools in their zeal to prove the capacity of liberated blacks.

And with it all the women of the race have had little opportunity for home life in plantation days and since. They were forced backward and away from the age-long concerns of their sex. From before "dayclean" till the tasks in the field were done, they carried their share of the work along with the men. With the coming of freedom the man and the woman continued to work side by side in the field. Cotton rows and cotton blossoms continued to be the background for the children, and the little homes on the new land holdings depended upon the family crop. But with the breaking

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up of the "Street" the old Mauma had a smaller group of children to look after, and gradually home life developed so that the different families became distinct. And family life has become a precious heritage.

Many of my readers will find it hard to believe this. They see a shifting population. They see Negro workmen who seem ever ready to move on like "Jo of Tom-all-Alone's" in Dickens. They cite Negro house-servants whose marital history has been continuous but not consecutive. But I am talking about Sea Island Negroes who have had a chance to buy their land and build their homes; who have lived in one spot for three generations. There are exceptions to the statement, even here, for in a group of six thousand one finds of course the shifting and the shiftless.

But come with me to our Community Class

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and let me introduce you to my friends among the Island women of the older generation. It is Wednesday. As we go across the sandy play-ground we hear the old spirituals drifting out from the sewing-room windows. The class has begun its meeting. We slip in. They are wonderfully glad to see us—mothers and grandmothers from forty to eighty, and like the children they have all walked in, one mile or five as it may be, some from "Miss Anne," some from "Tom Fripp," some from "Indian Hill," all from plantation homes. This class represents our first extension work at Penn, and through all the years the Community Class has bound the school to the homes.

"We wants to come to de college." That was in 1904 when the new school, a two-story, eight-roomed house was built at Penn. Of course they thought it was a college. Never

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had there been such a schoolhouse! For several years we had to fight that word college for while we were transforming a Negro school of the old academic pattern, dating back to the War between the States, into an agricultural and industrial training center, ours was none the less, as it had been for forty years, an elementary country school. "I ben to Penn School, but my chillun goes to de college." For many a parent as well as for many a child their first real climb upstairs was made in the new schoolhouse. The churches have their galleries, and some of the houses a second story, but both are reached by little enclosed stairways. Here was a second story twenty-three steps up, and a great open stair. I can see them now as they gingerly crept up and down, so carefully clinging to the banister which proved of real value to these adventurers.

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Yes, the women wanted to come to school, and so the first club was started—a woman's club—but always "Community Class" has been the better name for it. And here we are in the midst of it.

As we quietly take our places, the singing continues. A tapping on the floor, sometimes a soft clapping of the hands, makes the rhythm all the more distinct. Heads nod, and sometimes the bodies sway. There are old grandmothers with white head coverings, and very occasionally a bright colored bandanna. All are most neatly dressed. And how they so delight in "We Class!"

I remember, back in 1906, how I tried to introduce basketry. "Why don't the women make baskets?" I asked, in my ignorance. And I invited the old basket-maker to come in and give them points. Off we started, and

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they were a happy, busy, picturesque crowd, but I could feel that they did not rejoice in their baskets! They finished them, however, and not for years afterwards—and *then* from one of our many missionary visitors—did I discover that women do not make baskets in Africa! And so women don't make baskets on St. Helena. No, it is a man's craft, and until the race changes by many more decades of contact with a new environment, it is likely to remain a man's craft.

Next I tried knitting and fared better. But I had all kinds of trouble with my knitters, for this was an acquired art. Aunt Lily would hold her wool so loose she couldn't knit, and Aunt Sally would hold hers so tight she couldn't budge it. "This is splendid, Aunt Daphne," I said to one, and to my delight

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came the reply, "I'se doin' dis to show my
grands (grandchildren)."

The class had great patience with me! I tried to give them a course in Bible lessons. That seemed a reasonable thing to do. They love the Bible, and in many a home it is the only book. I had taught Bible at Hampton Institute during my seven years there, and it had been a favorite subject with teacher and students. But again I met only a meager success. I was neither a minister nor a Sunday School teacher of the Baptist or even the Methodist faith, so how could I teach them the Bible? And it was school anyway. When one of them said months afterward, "I yeddy yo' ben a Presbylocian," I thought I had found the real reason why I couldn't make a success of Bible study on a Wednesday afternoon in our Community Class.

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But when I had a course in hygiene and home emergency nursing the next year, we found we had struck the nail on the head, and ever since that has been the "course of study" and they never weary of it. "Yes, Chilé!" "Tow be sure!" "Ooner got de truf!" "Neber shum befo'!" used to make me feel that the lesson was being appreciated. It lay near to their traditional functions as home-makers and tenders of sick. Now the School Nurse gives them the course, and closer connections are made with clothes, cooking, and consumption.

Meanwhile, quilt-making took the place of our earlier efforts in basketry and knitting. At first they made quilts for themselves, but after a serious storm which called for emergent relief work in the community, they decided to make the quilts for those who were "worer off dan we." This step was taken entirely on

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their own initiative when I was "off Island." These older women as well as the children have thus grown with the school.

Draw in closer, the singing ended, and meet some of them whose lives reveal the range of woman's part in the development of our Island life—singers and teachers, midwives and church-mothers, farmers and managers of no mean ability, above all home-makers mothering the generations that come on.

Here is Aunt Lily still wearing the bandanna of the old days. She did her task in the plantations of long ago as a field hand. She can remember the old "Street" and the sound of the horn that called them all to work. Her son and daughter live in a neat home—four rooms with a "jump-up." And Matthew is a handy man and owns fifteen acres of land.

While we were waiting for the spiritual to

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be raised at the opening of the meeting, it was Aunt Lily's voice, as true as a song bird, that sounded first.

Jedus keep a-listenin' all de day long
Keep a-listenin' all de night
Jedus keep a-listenin' all de day long
For to hear some sinner pray.

Oh, de Jews trow Dan'el in de lion's den,
And how could Dan'el pray?
But all God's chillun hoverin' about
For to hear how Dan'el pray.

And so on, verse after verse, each one testifying that the women of the race know that Jesus keeps a-listening.

These women make our church-mothers—an entrenched function in the traditional religious

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life of the Island. In the early teens, the boy or girl steals out to Aunt Sally or Aunt Julia to tell of dreams and visions during the period when they are striving to join one of our churches on profession of faith. Faith, as the Island holds, must be tried out by long periods of prayer, and that "young men must see visions" is as firmly believed to-day on St. Helena as in the days of the Prophet Joel. These "spiritual mothers" are held in deep reverence as the guides to the church.

The women who have come from the "Street" of slavery days have made the nurses of the race. In another chapter I have dealt with that side of their life, and in our Community Class these "midders" could not be better represented than by Rivena Wroten of Scott plantation. Farmer and midwife are her professions. Straight and self-respecting, she

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is worried if in debt, for Berry, the hard working husband, had died suddenly and she is anxious because her "grand" has left school to go for cash in Savannah to meet some heavy expenses, this boll weevil season. We talked it over one evening just at sunset time, as I stopped at her home. Debts, boll weevil, and crop, "we class" and the "grands" were our topics of conversation. "De chillun is all I has to 'pend 'pon," she declared, but as I looked at the children before me, I felt that it was the old grandmother who was still the center of that home. We drifted into the long-ago days.

"No, I ain't bo'n on this Island. We live up at Bamberg and bad times come. My husband he ben de 'epublican leader under white boss, and time come when it seem lak de white people want to kill de colored people and he haf to run off to save his life. I ben lef wid de

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five chillun. White people ain't want me to leave. Dey know I knows how to do. But I had a good brother and he help me, and atter while he git a box car and pit we-all and de chickens and evory ting in an' we come down to Beaufort. I wuk at de hotel and den Berry buy dis place on Island.

"I learn my trade from my Missus. She teach me, and she teach me good. I serve many white people. I ain't eber work for de colored till I come to dis Island. I know eberyting to do and de mudders say dey ain't have it done like me. I clean an' I keep de bed an' de house clean. I have many grown-up man in Beaufort who meet me and give me something, for he know I ben his midder. And I has crowds and crowds of black chillun and dey look 'pon me too."

The women, scarcely less than the men, con-

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tinue to make our farmers as in the days of the plantations. Lucretia Simmons can handle the hoe and manage her fields so that she holds the respect of her three grown sons, all farming on acres near their mother's on Frogmore Plantation. Among the oldest farmers on the Island is Aunt Jane Rivers. She has been able to keep her little home on the Eustis Plantation through sheer grit and determination. When James R. Macdonald, for many years the leading white merchant of the Island, came in one evening and told the story of her "little bit of cotton," I asked him to write it for me, and he did so in this wise:

" 'Mr. Mac, I too glad fo' look 'pon yo' face once mo'!"

" 'Yes, Aunt Jane, I'm very glad to see you, too. How are you, and how are you getting along?'

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“ ‘Poo-el-ly, Mr. Mac, poo-el-ly. Ain’t you see how I cripple! Dis ain’t de Jane you use-tuh know. My whole frame is weak, and ax for my knee, I wouldn’t talk, it’s so painful. You know, Mr. Mac, when Jane Rivers fetch little bit o’ cotton like to dat, times mus’ be change. Mr. Mac, I couldn’t tell yo’ how I struggle to make dat one bag full o’ cotton. I jus’ try for plant a tas’, ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre) and dat’ll tell you how far back I gone. You members when Jane been a *Jane*, two acres wuz play fer me. I go out to de cotton patch in de mornin’, stick in one han’, and hoe in de udder. I jus’ try fer hoe two row. I brace myself, pit down de stick, and start hoe. I hoe an’ I hop, an’ I hoe an’ I hop. Presently here come de misery in me knee, an’ it hu’t me so bad I bleeged to fall in de alley on me back. An’, Mr. Mac, turn an’ twis’, as I will, I cyan’ rise up. De

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pain is so bad I cry. I hab to cry, Mr. Mac. I cry wid de pain, an' I cry wid de agrawation. I say, "Do Jesus, he'p dis poor old 'oman in de misery!" I whoop so dem people could hear me and come he'p me up. Well by and by Sue hear me and come fer he'p me, an' I get back to de house. When I ketch me bret I say, "Sue, do kindle fire and pit pot on so I kin cook hominy and get strenk to try again."

" 'Dat's de way, Mr. Mac, dat I struggle all summer to earn dis little bit ob money to put in me han', an' I tank God I'se spared to see de day.' "

Story 'pon story could I tell you of the women who have thus made the bridge with their own bent backs and laboring muscles between the old African and slavery days, and the sixty difficult years of freedom. There's Aunt Satira—always like a sunbeam. When

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we went out to see her after our summer holiday we found her touchingly grateful for our coming. "I yeddy oonuh come dat fust day, and I watch up de road for see." She longed for a picture book, and just before we left the Island that summer I gave her a scrap book which the boarding girls had made. I happened to ride down the road two hours later and there was Aunt Satira sitting down by the roadside and enjoying her book. I think she knew every picture in it before she reached home that night, and she enjoyed it as long as she lived.

I wish I had taken a picture of Aunt Tira. She is dead now and no longer joins in the spirituals or the good works of "we class." But there is a road across Saxtonville plantation where I always see her in memory, as she would come from her little two-roomed house and

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stand, arms crossed, head up, her short skirt tied tightly below the hips, as she had come in from the field. I can see her now as she knocked at **Hampton House** one evening with a big basket full of sweet potatoes. It was hard to believe she had carried it so far, but when one can use the head and walk along with the weight poised exactly, I suppose it is easier. All the older women have kept up that custom. It would be well for the younger ones to practice it and use it, copying their grandmothers instead of losing such a gift because the whites don't do it and can't. Aunt Tira would always shut her eyes and stick her lips far out when she talked. She emphasized everything by repetition, each repetition growing fainter and fainter until the last one was almost a whisper. On a visit to **Hampton House** she began by saying, "I cyan' stop 'cause I has my scrubbin'

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at home." We insisted on her walking through the living room, for she had never been in our house before, and she exclaimed, "Splendid, splendid, splendid, splendid, splendid! I come spend de whole day! I cyan' half see it now. De sun is too low, sun is too low, sun is too low."

One evening as I rode across Saxtonville on my way home, I saw a figure standing in the road, evidently waiting for me. It was Aunt Tira. Closing her eyes tight, and reaching out her lips as far as possible, she said, "I ben watchin' for oonuh, watchin' for oonuh! I see yo' when yo' go by from my fiel', and I decide to walk long wid yo' for it's gettin' dark, gettin' dark, gettin' dark." Community Maud had to settle down to a slow walk although her nose was pointed toward her stable, for I could do no less than accept Aunt Tira's escort.

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It was almost dark when we started, and quite dark when we reached the school road. Nowhere in America is it safer for one to be traveling alone than on the Island, for the Negroes are a quiet law-abiding folk and during all these nineteen years, we have been able to go out either day or night without fear, and without an escort, and seldom is our house locked. But Aunt Tira's sense of fitness—a heritage from slavery days when the Negroes were depended upon to take care of their young masters and mistresses, and the property—led her to add this mile's walk to her day's work with the hoe and she was surely over seventy then!

And as I think of Aunt Tira, I remember another morning when I stopped at her little house to see that all was well. She lived entirely alone. When I said good-by, she handed

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me two eggs as her gift—another hand-down from old African days, for there the stranger or friend brings eggs as a gift after a visit. I have cause to remember that gift for again I was riding Community Maud and it was no easy matter to carry two eggs on horseback. However, it was in the days of the belted-in shirtwaist and the eggs, stowed carefully on either side, came safely to **Hampton House** kitchen.

Our present Community Class president is Aunt Rina Miller, "mother of 25, grandmother of 52, and great-grand of nine head of children." Early marriage has been the rule, and mothers of sixteen years were very common in the first step of race development. Agnes Washington, wife of Cupid, was proud of her twenty-eight "head." Even in the large families we can find the "'doctored." No "mudder-

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less,” as our orphans are called, is allowed to stray on the Island.

It is rather unusual to find the old women living alone. There is usually a “grand” who can be spared, or a “mudderless” who can be adopted. We shall never forget Aunt Riah and Husky. Two most pathetic figures they were—Aunt Riah somewhere about ninety, and Husky somewhere about ten. They came to the school from their little old house on Frogmore—a walk of about three miles, and we always wondered how they managed it. Aunt Riah looked older than any one I have ever seen, and Husky, hollow-eyed and with the thinnest legs on St. Helena, had surely outgrown his name. He had been a “mudderless” and Aunt Riah had taken him in.

But Husky had certainly drawn a poor home, and yet I never heard him complain, nor

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did I ever see him rough with the old woman. Food for both had to be found when they made their pilgrimage to the school, and clothing too, so the Sales House had to come to the rescue.

The Sales House! I wonder how any rural school can do without one? Ours had a history that dates back to 1904 when we met the question of how we should handle the clothing and shoes that began to come to us in barrels. There was a little building on the edge of the grounds, fortunately near the road; there the barrels went; and there the contents were sold to the people. This little building has had a checkered career. It has been like a chambered nautilus! When we first came to the Island, it was used for a print shop and there a group of boys used to set type with a Penn School graduate as a teacher. The little equipment

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was wearing out. But I can understand how hard it must have been for the older teachers when we urged that printing be given up entirely, as it was a trade that failed to fit into the farmer's life; and we needed that little house for the carpenters. So it became our first Industrial building, though it could accommodate only six boys at one time, and gave way to our new Cope shops. As Sales House it became a veritable club for the women, who would stop by to see if any barrel "done come." Often they are able to buy here the very things that make it possible for them to go to church or their children to school. It is impossible to say how many of our Island children have been enabled to stay on the road to learning because of shoes from our Sales House shelves. Here eggs, chickens, sweet potatoes are as good as cash in exchange, and so the

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problem for some of the poor is partially solved. For it is a sobering thing to have a dress or a pair of shoes stand between you and an education. That can happen on the Sea Island.

Mrs. Juno Washington, who drove in from Scott Plantation every morning, took charge of the Sales House. She was a born manager, not only of shelves and boxes but of men, women and children. Perhaps that was why we called her husband Mr. Juno. She had a way with all comers, a clear flash to her eyes that carried no suspicion with it, but made for fair dealing.

One wonderful thing I noticed. Mrs. Juno would tell one person that a thing was fifty cents, or even a dollar. And another person might pay a quarter, or as little as ten cents for it. I never heard any wrangling either. The

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price was set to suit the need of that particular buyer, and Mrs. Juno seemed to know them all. And to be able to keep them all happy. Here was a social sense fully developed, though never trained. The Sales House was to serve, and payment, wherever possible, saved self-respect and gave independence to the purchaser.

Then we always have the "needy barrels" and to that barrel Mrs. Juno would go for Husky and Aunt Riah, and others who could not always pay, even in eggs. The clothing and the money that comes into the Sales House have always gone directly into the community, and when barrels come, or express boxes, or parcel post packages, homes are helped and school made more possible. From the "needy barrel" go also the things that can help the family whose house "bu'n down smack and smoov" last night, the family where long ill-

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ness has taken all the money, the family where the newly born comes without the necessary preparation. No sadder message comes to my office than that "the Sales House is dry," for that means a wait and a going without, when so little means so much.

The people often know before I do that the barrels "done come." You can see them waiting on the little porch, called by Mrs. Juno "the needable porch," and built by the boys in our carpentry class. One morning I went in just as a barrel had been opened and one of our very needy ones was going off with her longed-for package. "Yo' tell de people dese barrels has gold in dem fo' we," was the message that mother sent, as she made her curtsey.

Mrs. Juno was the first president of our Community Class, the kind of executive officer

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a club is proud of. Her quiet dignity as she presided, and her appreciation of all the school contacts with the community, made a valuable link with the past and the present. She had been a baby in the "Street" and remembered the ways of slavery. She had come to Penn School in the war days when its bell with the inscription "Proclaim Liberty" took the place of the horn, and so had traveled through its history with Miss Towne and Miss Murray, first as a school girl, then as a teacher, then as a young mother, and finally, although a grandmother, back at the school as a community worker.

When she was born, back in the slave cabin, it was evident that her father was a white man. The white mistress asked the black mother again and again to tell her who the father was,

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always to be met with the answer, "I'd jun' know. I'd jun' know." So it happened they gave the name of Juno to the baby.

We forget the sex relationships of slavery days. No Negro mother had any rights, and now when I hear white women speak of Negro women as if they all have a moral twist, my mind goes back to those days of the "Street," when the bodies and souls of the people were not their own. It is well to remember the tremendous force of inherited weakness. It is well to know that there has been a spiritual fight for sixty years. And it has been the fight of the mothers.

"How many daughters have you?" I asked Aunt Julia one day. "Four," was the reply, "and every one has ben married from my house." Or, as one of our grandmothers put it: "Every one of mine has ben married off my

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hand." Marriage on the Island has taken a place of honor. Many times the school teachers have helped to trim the church. And many wedding cakes are made in our school kitchen. The Negro mothers try to protect their girls, but even so a Negro girl has a hard time. The poorest type of white man feels at liberty to accost her and follow her, and force her. The stories of pluck and determination are not so well known as the stories of failure. The explanation of the failures go back over the years to slavery days, when we of the white race gave to the aliens, whom we had not invited, but compelled to come to America, this inheritance. If we could take some of the blame for the whirlwind that has been reaped, the Negro woman would be strengthened. Every time a white woman says "All Negro women have that weakness,"—and I've heard

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not a few declare it as the last word—I believe we keep them down and make their struggle harder.

Household life on the Islands has had a long “jump up” to make from the slave cabin to the comfortable home. The economic partnership of husband and wife in the fields made its development slower; both worked at the now self-appointed tasks. Boys and girls had to wait for the home attractions—the crop being far more important in the eyes of their parents. Comforts develop, even the demand for them develops, only after the primitive need of mere living has been attended to.

When Freedom came, one of the most difficult knots to unravel was the marriage relationships. Said Aunt Rina, “We all has Parson Blanket marriage befo’ de war—no minister—jus’ de ol’ leader ob de praise house would

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pray ober dem. The chillun belonged to de Maussuh of de woman. After war, dey all see clearer and git married ober again by de preacher." The first marriage certificates and the first land titles, no less than the Emancipation Proclamation itself, were scraps of paper by which a race covenanted with Freedom.

When death came to Mrs. Juno herself, her mantle as sales house manager fell on Mrs. Virginia Brown, a feminine case of Elijah and Elisha! . She, like Mrs. Juno, links the old with the new, a graduate of Penn who knew the Founders well, and secretary of the Community Class in the years when Mrs. Juno was president. She is a home-maker from whose household first children, then "adopteds," then grands and finally "off-island" children for whom there are no beds in the school dormitories, have kept coming to Penn.

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In continuing the work at the Sales House, she has worn the mantle with dignity. Mrs. Juno's test had come and was splendidly met in 1911 when a second great storm wrecked so many island homes; Mrs. Virginia has had to face the emergency brought about by the boll weevil.

Along with the ordinary vicissitudes of life, and the occasional visitations of fever and storm and pest which scotched the community, changes have come to the Island and to the people in quick succession—changes which stood for youth and growth, but which none the less have tried men's souls—and women's of this older generation I have described. The making of the print shop over into a sales house was a small one significant of many, as Penn School has expanded from academic to industrial training—a school that conceives the

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whole Island as its class room, its farm and shop.

There were many who loved the old ways devotedly. Mrs. Juno was one and yet she could look on all the changes coming to the island and its people with confidence instead of fear or distrust. It was the same in her attitude toward the school and its revolutionary change from the old ways. "We had dear leaders," she said one day in speaking of the founders. "They planted for us a little bush, and they waited until it grew up, and acorn fell. We ought to be thankful for God ain't leave us alone, but has sent two young doves to de Island." The two successors to the founders, the "young doves," found qualities of loyalty, and untiring devotion to duty in this Negro woman, born a slave, a good representative of the Penn School spirit, a wonder-

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ful friend during those early years when they seemed young and daring to the conservative Islands.

The Mrs. Junos in the world, of whatever race, are the bridges needed between the old and the new. When she prayed in one of our services, saying "Darlin' Jesus, please to bind us all together with a bandage of love," she perhaps unknowingly expressed one of the greatest needs in any community. For those who work for its upbuilding make many blunders, all unwittingly, and can often feel a sickness of heart and mind, that needs the "bandage of love."



PART III
FROM SLAVE HUT TO HOME

“The people have been traveling the road from bunks to spring beds, from the one room house to the comfortable home of several rooms. The better homes are wanted. The change from windows protected only by rude shutters, to windows with glass, and to some provided with screens to keep out the insects which make life a burden during our warm weather, shows a rise in standards. . . . The first homes came with the gift of land and books that freedom gave the blacks. Can the necessary lessons in economics go hand in hand with the lessons of the books? Will the land and the homes continue in their own hands? Will the children of this generation continue the struggle that means real freedom?”

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It seemed like a contradiction that our first problem to meet when we went to a Sea Island to live should be the water supply. At first we "toted" the water from the well down by the roadside which had sufficed Penn School children and the passers-by for over fifty years. Then came the well driven nearer our own kitchen, and we could pump the water to that one place and carry from there. Up to this point our own experiences exactly tallied with those of our Island neighbors, and we learned the true measure of the necessities and comforts of life.

The coming of our water works four years later was an Island event. Why we should take so much trouble was a mystery—God fur-

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nished water as near as twelve feet from the surface in some places. But trenches were dug—by Penn School girls; pipes were laid and septic tanks constructed—by Penn School boys—and finally with a combination of farmer, carpenter, girls and boys, and the experts who came from “off Island,” the tank was in place fifty feet up, the little two-horse engine began its service and we were rich people! I couldn’t begin to tell of the long delays in striking water that would stand the chemical test for drinking purposes. Once we struck salt water and had to pull up and begin again. On St. Helena, only sand and marl appeared as we drilled and drilled almost to a thousand feet. I had begun to fear we should see the Chinese pigtails when at last we were rewarded with success. The children who dug the trenches thought that the water would flow through the

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sand into the house. The new white enamel bathtub was mistaken for "de tank" till the 10,000 gallon reservoir arrived! The people stopped by every day, and one bit of praise for doing the work, I received and remember. "O Missus Cooley, yo' so wholesome!"

When Aunt Binah came to see me one morning some time after the new system was finished, she looked up at the tank and said, rather scornfully I felt, "W'at de good o' him? I ben watch him ebery day. He ain't do a ting yit." I took her to the corners of the house where we had the big spiggots for the fire hose and explained to her the plan—how we could use either side according to the wind. I took her to the kitchen and turned the water on for her to see. She dropped on her knees saying, "Tank God, I lib to see dis day."

Possibly it was the mystery of it that bore in

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upon her—this drawing of water from a pipe as startling to her as would have been the gush from the rock when Moses struck his rod. Perhaps it was the promise it held of release from drudgery, to a woman to whom water totting had been part of the inexorable burden of life, a most spectacular innovation in domestic economy—a vantage point from which we could review in perspective the evolution of household equipment.

With us on St. Helena, the only relics of the slave “Street” are patches of oyster shells, turned up by the plow, which like the kitchen middens” of an ancient city mark where once stood the regular rows of plantation cabins. They were usually built quite close together, small shelters for the group upon whom the cotton crops depended. “Our first work,” wrote Miss Towne, who founded Penn School

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in 1862, "was to visit the people in their homes.

"The houses were of frame, clapboarded, with small windows, shuttered, not glazed; some of the chimneys were of brick, some of mud and sticks. The floors were sand and lime, beaten hard and worn in hollows. At one side were the open hearth and wide chimney, but the fires were small, the woods being carefully preserved by the owners. Large cracks under the doors let in a rush of keen air in winter. There were two or three bunks in each cabin for the grown people, but the younger ones slept on heaps of filthy rags on the floor with a blanket to cover. The household utensils consisted of one pot, in which they cooked their hominy or peas with salt pork. Occasionally a frying pan was seen. I speak of the field Negroes, not the house serv-

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ants. In such homes, spoons there were none, but long well worn oyster shells served the purpose. The elders first helped themselves from the hominy pot, then it was given to the children, who finished all that could be easily scraped out. Then the dogs worked at it for hours! Cleanliness, neatness, home life were impossible; everything spoke of discomfort and misery.

“And yet,” she could add, “a happier, jollier set of people was never seen; song and laughter prevailed.”

Old Uncle Carolina added his own bit to the picture one bright morning as he sat on my office porch. He had rowed from Oaks Plantation in a leaky bateau, bringing the baskets he had “built,” for these baskets made of the river rushes and sewed with strips of palmetto were all that could keep the wolf from his

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door! When he found out that we would buy them, he worked so faithfully that I began to fear our little attic would soon be too full of baskets to allow entrance to any one or anything. Constant and rather ridiculous problems confront one daily when trying to help people help themselves.

But to get back to the "Street." "We had two streets of houses," said he. "It wasn't a rough time fo' me in slavery. Yo' see I ate f'om de table. Sence, I had to scuffle fo' myself" (and Carolina had proved himself a poor "scuffer" for he had not been able to hold on to the land and home left him by his parents). "I might as well tell oonuh, I well off wid de white people. Dey all right, only driver bery rough. He ben a cole black man. We all gits up fo' dayclean, my father ben head man obuh plow han's, an' my mother in de fiel' wid de

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hoe. We lib in de 'Street' bery well. One chimney house, one room. Cuffy and me sleep in loft on moss, kiver wid blanket, for Mausuh gib one to parents an' one to chillun. Parents sleep on board nailed up side of de house, on moss too."

With freedom came the opportunity to buy land and so these field hands were the first of their race in America to become real estate owners. The federal government handled the crops for over a year. The Southern owners could not return to claim the land, and it was finally sold at tax sales, broken up into ten-acre farms, which the Negroes bought on easy terms, and later the original owners received the proceeds of the sale less the taxes owed. With this ownership of the acres has come the self-respect which to-day strikes the visitor to the Island.

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The little homes are now scattered over the plantations. Rarely are they built near the main roads, but you must travel along grass-grown lanes to them, often over very uncertain little bridges built across the ditches. They are white-washed, with trimmings of blue, green or purple, showing the Negroes' love of color, and fitting into the background of marsh, field, tall pines and spreading oaks. They stand on stilts of palmetto logs or brick as the case may be, for in our sandy soil no cellar is dug—the water is too near the surface.

Here and there, one will find the one-room house where the old grandmother may be living. On our islands we never use the word "cabin," which is significant, for these people jumped from the "Street" to their own homes. The old people prefer to live separately, even if it means only a one-room house, rather than

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to go in “wid de gang o’ chillun.” But even the smallest houses are usually divided by a partition which separates sleeping and living rooms. Where, in these older structures, glass windows have not taken the place of the wooden shutters, the interiors seem as dark as a pocket when you enter from the bright outside. To the shuttered occupants, the choice lies between all the light and air or none, and we can have cold weather and searching winds on the Island. Always is the cry for “beddin’!” We long for old blankets and quilts as the forty-niners longed to see gold. I remember one old man on Dathaw Island who had one quilt in the house for his two “grands” and himself, and the “grands” crying all night with the cold. We had to send to the store and buy a quilt to send over by our nurse, or else stay awake in our own warm beds!

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On our island it can be so warm in the summer an "aig can cook in de sand same like a cook-stove." That is the better weather for the very poor. But on the other hand it can be so cold that even snow is occasionally seen. Isaiah—eight summers old—awoke one night to see something strange and white lying on the floor. He jumped out of bed and put the white something to his mouth. It was snow that had drifted in through the open places in the old house, and he cried as he went back to bed, "Oh, I ben so disappoint. I tink he ben gradu-lated sugar!" So our horizons expand.

It was Luther, a boy from a Negro community which Santa had always failed to visit in person, who wrote to his mother:

"I would like to know how you all enjoyed your Christmas. Why, I had a nice time because I saw something that I had never seen

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before. I saw Santa Claus walk across the floor and I had never seen him before. What you think about that? It pays a man to leave home sometimes, my mother, and he will see more and learn more."

When Community Maud and Jubilee, our two school horses, carried us to Aunt Betsey's home, we had to pick up a small boy to show us the little path that wound off from the road. It was picturesque in its setting of live oaks and moss. We found her and her house tumbling to pieces, and we wondered which would go first, for Aunt Betsey was well over eighty. The poor old soul told us that she could not keep warm in bed! The quilt that had come down in one of our "welcome barrels" made her so happy that she got right down on her knees and thanked God and the friends then

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and there most fervently. No wonder she could not keep warm! Daylight could be seen in the roof over her head, and the quilt she had was so full of holes you could not have lifted it without increasing their number. You forget the picturesque side of it when you face poverty like that.

A house on the same plantation, and near Aunt Betsey's, registered an advance over the one-room home. It had a general living-room, one bedroom, and a small lean-to kitchen. In the bedroom was one double bed, for the father and mother. But the six head of children had to bundle themselves up as well as they might and sleep on the floor in front of the fireplace, much as was done in slavery days. There are still too many homes like this. And oh, so often in these homes, crowded to the

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brim, we find, as I have brought out elsewhere, that they have added to their own number by adopting the "mudderless."

To-day the majority of the homes on the Islands register another stage in family fortunes. They are story-and-a-half houses. Here we find the bedroom and living-room, with a hall running through the house, and with the dining-room and kitchen built on at the rear, sometimes a combination, and sometimes divided. In the "jump-up," reached by a little flight of stairs, there are one or two bedrooms where the children usually sleep, and so, if the family has not outgrown its home, there can be privacy. Yet as we studied the homes and became acquainted with the families in them, we found that too rarely are new rooms added as the children grow in number and in size. And so big brothers and sisters

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grow weary of the crowded quarters, and go to the cities for money and excitement. The cramped quarters of the rural home have a great deal to do with the city problem!

When old Uncle Jim came over from Dathaw Island for some "drinkin' medicine," he was thunderstruck at the sight of **Hampton House**, the cottage built for the two white principals. "Jes' one step from Heaven," he murmured. He had never seen a stove, and my typewriter petrified him. "I sure ben to de city," said he as he started off, and when I thought of his half hour's row in a clumsy bateau through a winding tide river with the marshes on either side, to a little island where a small group of Negroes live on land that does not belong to them and in homes that are not so good as ours on St. Helena, I realized more than ever that all things are relative! Why

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St. Helena could seem like the city to him. Why in turn there is that lure in Savannah and Charleston and Atlanta and after them the cities of the North to our young Islanders.

Country school teachers should spend a good proportion of their time in the homes, if they are to have the background they need for their work. Surely education ought to fit the home. And in taking up some of the forces through which we have sought to help raise the level of our Island homes, let us look at a few of the elements that go into their makeup.

“If you’ll jes’ gib me a few ole boa’d an’ brick for build me a li’l house,” is the modest call made by the old who long for their own fireplace. That fireplace is the center of every home. In the most primitive relics of the days that followed the “Street” you will see the chimneys made of mud and sticks, clinging to

the side of the house with no very firm hold and often losing their hold as they and the occupant grow old together. When the home is absolutely down, there is no chimney and fire is made on sand in one corner of the room; but only a few such homes have we found, for the Negroes try to take care of their poor. Occasionally you will see an old brick chimney standing up against the evening sky. It looks like a monument! And it is! Sometimes it means that the house has been moved to a more desirable house plot, sometimes it stands for the failure of a family. It was once the very center of the home, and I never see one without wondering whether the family tried to raise its standards too quickly, before the land could give them economic freedom?

The fireplace of mud in the slave hut required but a simple equipment; usually an iron

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pot, perhaps the oyster shells for spoons, and often the household baskets, made, I have been told, by those "hands" who brought from Africa the craft of making them watertight. They had long been used only as farm baskets when we first made their acquaintance, for why take the trouble to make them watertight, when a tin pail could be bought for ten cents?

The simple diet which went with the fireplace of mud and sticks—grits and white meat with the additions of sea food and sweet potatoes—has persisted in a measure among the old. We found the sweet potato being fed even to a two-days-old baby! Miss Murray, who shared with Miss Towne all those early experiences immediately after the coming of freedom, tells of Mira who at the age of three was cooking for herself.

"Mira had never seen a tablecloth nor fork.

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If she ran to her mother and said, 'I hungry,' her mother put in her hand a huge, raw, sweet potato, which the three-year-old child would deftly tuck into the hot ashes in the fireplace and, sitting down beside it, wait with the patience of her race till by some intuition she knew that it was cooked. Then she would break it open, and hot, smoking, mealy, though she had neither salt nor butter, it was a meal not to be despised."

With the coming of freedom, cotton farming did not lend itself to a demand for variety. The routine was not easily broken. It was easier to buy the cans of food from the merchant's shelves with the cash that came to hand when the cotton was sold than to work a home garden. For two generations following slavery there was no opportunity to learn how to cook nor how to can food. But primitive standards

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have given way, and now many kitchens have their stoves and adequate equipment. We brought cooking into the school curriculum and demands for a more varied diet, sure signposts of progress, began to increase.

But there was no enthusiasm for the "garden stuff" at the beginning. Greens were considered fit food for the stock! And they gained favor very slowly. Grits and white meat, with sweet potatoes, still held first place. Thus it was that the hot school lunch—cooked by the girls in the cooking classes and eaten by the crowd of children who had taken the long walks from their plantation homes—became an educational force. A longer step was taken when the cooking teacher began to go out to the homes and help the mothers raise tomatoes for home use and canning. Many a tomato plant began its rather uncertain career in the

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cotton fields, for there all the fertilizer had been put and the plants had a better chance than near the house where one naturally pictures a garden. Gardens, granted a right to share in the supply of fertilizer, have taken their place in the scheme of things now, and home canned fruits and vegetables have found their way to the tables.

Fortunately, our first efforts for a tomato crop were a success. When they were ripe the women came to school every day to use the school's canner and to learn from the cooking teacher all she knew about the art of canning. Neighbors on the plantations would unite and bring their product in an ox-cart, working together in the school grove in the preparation and the cooking. They were at it from day-clean till dark, a jolly crowd, sitting under the great pines chatting and singing, and passing

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on all the Island news. At noontime a few were assigned to prepare the lunch and they would disappear to the school kitchen and have all the fun of using the big range and the full equipment. The women always "threw up" a nickel or dime to cover expenses and so relieve the school of what might have been a burden, and the luncheon committee always saw to it that the kitchen was left as immaculate as they found it. And I wonder if the school kitchen did not have as great a fundamental value as many books.

These women who raised the tomatoes, who carried home the bright shining cans, who enjoyed the lunch at school, naturally became the apostles of the new diet. They began to see their gardens carry over through the winter months, and they had a community responsibility to meet. The work had to spread over

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more of the Island area; it was not always practicable for some of their neighbors to come to school; sometimes there was only a little to can and it did not seem worth while to travel so far. So canning clubs were born. This meant that each team "threw up" the money for a club canner, owned and used by all, kept safely at the captain's house where the club would usually meet. The women who had learned canning passed on the knowledge and so the work, started under the trees by the school-house, goes on in the yards of the homes where it normally belongs. "I was hungry and ye fed me," said a great Teacher over 1,900 years ago.

At the Farmers' Fair in the autumn, when the men exhibit their farm crops the women exhibit their home products, and the clubs and the school girls now make rows and pyramids

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of fruits and vegetables in tins and in glass. Glass jars have grown in popularity, for they can be used from year to year, a good exercise in thrift, and "they look so pretty" too.

Next to the chimney, symbol of cookery and all that diet stands for in the life of the rural home, comes the well as a tool of home life. Very few of our homes have water nearer than a well in the yard or field. As we ourselves waited four years for water works and plumbing in Hampton House, we know how difficult it is to keep up sanitary standards when water has to be carried from the field. In our desire to keep well and defeat any possible germs, which, as Clarinda said in her hygiene class one day, "get in de stomeck an' hatch dar," we even went so far as to boil all our drinking water.

Since our own experience with the water

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problem—and I am glad we had it—I have never ceased to wonder how the people do manage to keep as clean as they do. Saturday is our wash day for fabrics and the human form as well, for all must be in readiness for Sunday. Yes, I wonder at it, and I do not believe it is due to training. I believe it is racial. Many people will not agree. Perhaps they are thinking of the poorer Negroes' quarters in town where dwellings are crowded together, where the water supply may be, even in these enlightened days, from a pump in the alley, where people live crowded together, six in a room. They really have less chance at soap and civilization than our Sea Islanders here in the open. In the buckets on our little stoves or in the pots on the fireplaces, Saturday night brings the bath water for every member in the family from Uncle Sam to Freezie, and on Saturdays

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the landscape is bright with the many-colored clothes and bedspreads hanging out on the fences, the yuccas, and the clothes lines. Lace curtains have taken a place of honor beside the bedspread, with the coming in of sash windows. They are used in the chancel of their churches as well as in their homes.

The first floors were of earth, then came the wooden floors, and I am glad they have jumped the carpeting stage. The young housekeepers are using rugs, a few of them being made on the little loom at the school, and so they have naturally adapted their advance to the hot climate. Rocking chairs have been rather rare. When we gave one as a prize for regular attendance in the Community Class, old Aunt Lily won it. She had walked in from Tom Fripp, a distance of about three miles each way and a good step for an old lady far the other

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side of seventy! As she proudly took her seat in it in front of the class, she raised that spiritual which pictures the joy of sitting in the rocking chair in Heaven. Surely it fitted the occasion perhaps as well and better than the spiritual, "I ain't afraid to die," which was raised at one meeting just after I had given a talk on the danger of germs and preventive measures to be taken, as a few cases of measles had appeared on the Island!

In the older homes, the walls are often papered with newspapers and bright-colored pictures, a cheap and clean method of finish when it is impossible to ceil the clapboards. At Christmas time there is many a call for newspapers to help "to dress the house," and at that season appears the fresh whitewash and the new paint.

The Negroes love pretty things, and natu-

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rally we find a tendency to crowd things in these little homes. That it is hard to throw treasures away is a failing that belongs to many whites, too! When Hampton House was new, we let the many visitors walk through, and we still suggest a visit to the strangers who have never seen it. From the first I was struck with the interest shown in our pictures. One day I found Dan gazing earnestly at a photograph of the Lucerne Lion. Dan was a "drift," perhaps seven years old, living with an old man in whose house there was not a single picture. Suddenly he turned to me and asked shyly, "Is it an angel, muh?" His first experience with pictures was awe-inspiring!

There seems to have been only one domestic craft, the making of baskets similar to those found in some parts of Africa to-day, artistic and durable, soft brown in color. They even

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pay the taxes on some of the little homes, but they are always made by the men and boys, so they do not help the Aunt Katharines. It would seem surprising that we do not find furniture made by hand from our native trees, rustic furniture that is both cheap and comfortable, but we must remember that these people were the field hands and that very few of them had opportunity to see the furnishings of the whites and there was only an occasional carpenter among them. Among the younger group we find victrolas, small organs, sewing machines, and a few baby carriages. Out and in we find flowers; there is hardly a home that has not its geraniums, chrysanthemums, and odd rose bushes, and from these home flower beds have come many a plant for our Hampton House garden. The men and boys, as well as the mothers and sisters, wear flowers and show

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especially in their love of color the strong artistic feeling of the race.

Filing cases are usually dull things. But at Penn School we have one that is full of deep interest, because there are the records of the teachers' visits to the homes from which the children come. These sheets, carefully written after the teacher has found out all the points that go to make the background of the child, are a record of standards lifted and still advancing. They serve as pictures and I believe that rural teachers can do their work well only when the picture of the home and the whole family is clearly in mind. Here is an average "picture."

Size of house: Five rooms. Neatness: Good.
Neatness of yard: Good. Outbuildings: Two.
Neatness: Fair.

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Size of farm: 22 acres. Crops: Corn, peas, sweet potatoes, cotton, sugar cane.

Garden: about twenty by thirty feet.
Woodland: about half an acre.

Occupation: Mother, farming and house-work. Father, farming.

Attached to this teacher's sheet is the one made out by the school nurse, who follows the plan of our state Board of Health in her physical examinations. And so the bridges are being made between the school and the homes and as the school belongs to the people, their homes and farms become a normal part of the equipment which is to be improved through their own efforts and knowledge.

We began with our own home—Hampton House.

Well do I remember the day during our first

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year when Aunt Maria, who was then our laundress, brought some friends with her to see the new house. I was busy at the desk, so I told her to take them through. Very silent they were. I could hear the gentle "umph, umph" as they saw one thing after another. We had a small statue of the Venus de Milo on a book-case. The personally-conducted party stood by it for some time. I stopped my work and told them in answer to their question, "What dat?" that it was a statue of Venus. "'Umph, 'umph. I t'ought so!" was the answer. But when they reached the bedrooms upstairs, Aunt Maria took full charge and Miss House heard her telling all she knew. When she opened the linen closet, to her delight she heard her say, "An' dis am to imitate we how to live."

So Hampton House has played its part in

the scheme of things. Built by Island workmen under the supervision of a Hampton graduate, it took its name as a sign of all that Hampton has meant in the lives of the principals and the Hampton-trained teachers we then and since have brought to St. Helena. Yet, however useful **Hampton House** has been, the cottages built for the families of these school workers of the Negro race have had an even larger part to play.

On St. Helena no new house, nor additions to old houses are complete till the "**House Blessing**" has taken place. When the new house for our superintendent's family was finished, a group of school boys, girls, teachers, men who had worked on the house, and some plantation neighbors gathered together. This is always a religious service and that afternoon, as the sun was setting across the little marsh

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river, lighting the great pines that surround the new cottage with that soft brilliancy that belongs to the South, spiritual after spiritual was “raised” by Joshua E. Blanton, the worker, whose beautiful tenor voice will always be remembered on the Island, and as the house was to be his own new home, there was a peculiarly inspired note in the songs that evening. The scripture reading from the Songs of David followed, and then one of the Island men who had had a large share in the work of the house, a “field hand” in overalls, offered the prayer of dedication and consecration, which was followed by more spirituals which filled the rooms with their melody. “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it,” is a vivid message on St. Helena.

So it is that to-day, as we travel down the oyster-shell road from Penn School, we come

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across in the field the tiny home of Mrs. Wigg, with its mud and stick chimney, built for her by the boys of the Young Men's Christian Association and her neighbors on the plantation to give her the privacy of her own hearthstone. We see the attractive homes built on the school farm, and we pass the homes of Penn School graduates with their added comforts demanded by the larger outlook. They stand as the promise of a better day for all people, for an Island future that holds out opportunity for the generation coming on. Here is Dr. York Bailey, who had the courage to go forward to the medical profession after going through the classes at Penn when Miss Towne and Miss Murray were still here. He graduated from the Medical School of Howard University in Washington, D. C., and came back to the Island in 1906, where, to use Booker T. Wash-

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ington's phrase, he dropped down his bucket where he was.

We had no physician on the Island, and I have told of Dr. Bailey's work in another chapter, but I want you to see his house; it is an achievement and an inspiration to any Penn School boy. It stands back from the road, with a neat wire fence around it, a lawn planted, an orchard in the rear, a concrete walk to the steps. It is a two-story house and the windmill nearby tells the story—running water and a bath-tub. The furnishings inside are as attractive and in as good taste as could be desired—a real home.

“Dr. York” cleverly built the house and had it all ready for his bride, whoever she might be. When she finally came to St. Helena, a Hampton graduate to teach at Penn, little did she anticipate that her future home and hus-

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band were ready and waiting for her. And fortunately he selected wisely—a teacher with a deeply-felt community spirit. So a dream came true. A Penn School boy came with the larger training back to the Island—so well trained and with so much skill that he has ministered to white patients as well as to his own race. He seems like one of the school family always, for as an active member of our co-operative committee of management, and as a farmer raising some of the best lettuce, and shipping more peanuts than any other farmer in our first coöperative effort, he is serving his community.

When Penn School graduates can thus pass on the torch, the future seems more secure. As farmers and teachers and as home builders, the years are testing them out. Education is to give power, not technical drill, and the gradu-

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ates' homes are the bridges between school and people that prove the strength of the links in our educational chain.

When the National Better Homes Campaign started, St. Helena Island fell into line. It fitted into our scheme of things. A general committee of seven was formed of Penn School teachers and Islanders, with Miss House as chairman of the whole. Each member of this committee was chairman of a sub-committee, and there were many hands to swing the campaign. The boys worked under the chairman of the grounds and surroundings, the girls with the committee of interior decoration and furnishings; the Island merchants, white neighbors, members of the committees, loaned all that was needed—and Jessamine Cottage, the little model home, stood as a demonstration,

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open every day for a week to the visitors that came from all parts of the Island. And the best part of it all was that the work was done by the second generation of a people who had traveled down the road from the "Street" where a home in its true sense was unknown.

The poster committee held meetings night and day, and all over the Island. We have no newspapers on St. Helena. But news travels swiftly to all corners by some strange underground telephone. Whatever this means of communication is, it is a help to any publicity committee!

Hundreds of posters were made, and gave the message, "Follow the arrow to Jessamine Cottage." These were posted from end to end of St. Helena. And then came red arrows—all pointed to the school, all pointed to the Dem-

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onstration House, and the last one was posted on the gate which hospitably stood open through the week in which St. Helena was competing with 961 other American communities.

Then came a letter that made all St. Helena happy, from Washington, from the Department of Commerce, from the office of the secretary, and signed by Herbert Hoover. "It gives me real pleasure to inform you that St. Helena has won the third prize, \$50, for having one of the best demonstration houses in 1922 Better Homes in America Campaign—" In 1923, the Demonstration went one better and won the second prize, \$200, followed by a letter from the President of the United States. And you may be sure that the Island "underground" carried the tidings from Lands End to Coffins

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Point and up and down the roads that weave the Island homes into a community. With the tidings went the lessons of Jessamine Cottage and later of Gantt and the impulse of their example.

The people have been traveling the road from bunks to spring beds, from the one room to the comfortable home of several rooms. The better homes are wanted. The change from windows protected only by rude shutters, to windows with glass, and to some provided with screens to keep out the insects which make life a burden during our warm weather, shows a rise in standards.

There is promise in all this. But underneath it all lie the problems in education and agricultural economy which school and community face to-day no less than sixty years ago.

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I know I would like to read,
Like to read,
Like to read dat sweet story ob old.
I would like to read.

sang the slave mothers and fathers. The first homes came with the gift of land and books that freedom gave the blacks. Can Penn School increase the love for the home in the country? Can the necessary lessons in economics go hand in hand with books. These are the questions. Will the homes of the free continue in their own hands? Will the children of this generation continue the struggle that means real freedom?



PART IV
THE YOUNGER GENERATION

“But above all let me bear witness to the new generation as they have carried themselves under conditions where they have had a chance to show the stuff that is in them. This may help others to see life as these girls have had to come at it, the lay of some of their chief obstacles, the way to overcome them. It may help others to understand that while the ancient occupations of womenfolk remain their charge, the gauge that freedom set to these Negro women of the southern countrysides was not to become housemaids to be had for wages by city dwellers; but to become the home-makers and mothers and farm women for their own rural communities.”

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THE YOUNGER GENERATION

As there was a hunger for learning in the days of the grandmothers, so there is to-day. Even rain doesn't keep the girls from school. In some places the tide rivers come across our roads when we have the big storms, and the children take off shoes and stockings and wade through. They all seem to have wet feet, for overshoes are almost unknown, and why they don't get sick is a question. When girls in their teens are willing to walk fourteen to sixteen miles a day and keep it up through cold and heat, it shows a real desire. And to-day Penn School means to them not only books, but the use of many tools. For our effort has been to connect with the school both the field work and the housekeeping which make up the activities of the Island homes.

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As pointed out in my introductory pages, the academic tradition of the earlier Negro schools had to be overcome, no less than apathy and persistent antagonism toward any Negro education whatever. When, as emissaries of the new teaching, we came from **Hampton** to **Penn** twenty years ago, our first laundress showed us how far the pendulum had swung in this direction. She had been to school as a girl. She had book learning. But books had not taught her to wash and iron. The first week the towels were all folded like napkins, so I showed her how to fold them, and the next week the napkins were all folded like towels!

General Armstrong, founder of **Hampton** Institute, sent his graduates out with the command, "Use what you have," and so our schoolhouse itself has served always as an industrial building for the large group of girls.

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The most primitive rural school can make a beginning in vocational training in the same way.

With our introduction of industrial education at Penn, the scrubbing brush and broom no less than the rake and hoe became a part of the educational equipment. The girls, their mothers and their grandmothers had always scrubbed, but in many families they had failed to keep up the old standards. I sat in my office one Saturday morning and between letters asking for scholarship aid for the school-children, I supervised three girls who were earning some school fees by scrubbing. They never thought of moving anything. I found one of them scrubbing all around the legs of a stepladder. But they were perfectly willing to do it right when the way was pointed out to them. And when the girls first washed our

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windows, strange and even marvelous were the results—a fairly bright spot in the middle of each pane of glass, with an almost fantastic borderland of soap and grime. But why expect anything else? Some of these girls had never washed a window before, because many of the little freed homes that took the place of the plantation “Street” had not afforded anything better than wooden shutters.

Our early sweeping was as casual as our scrubbing. One afternoon I found all the brooms scattered and all the girls fled. A band had been heard, and who could withstand that? The cooking began in one of our class-rooms, and with a long board neatly covered with oil-cloth, placed on two wooden horses at one side of the room, we had our dining-room. School lunches for hungry and weary children soon be-

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came a reality, and so the schoolgirls cooked the practical food of daily life.

The passing on of the good things is the vital thing in all life. If I who have had all that a long and rich inheritance can give—an inheritance that reaches back to the hills and moors of Scotland—an education that was uninterrupted from babyhood through preparatory school and college—can pass on the best of it, then I need not be ashamed. But when I see how much I have, and compare it with the short and meager inheritance of these women on the Sea Islands—well, I wonder that I and so many others have such short patience.

It was a natural outgrowth of the idea of home training to build a home for our teachers who came from “off Island,” and to make it large enough to house some girls who could

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have more intensive training. So Benezet House was built, and named after old Anthony Benezet, that intrepid Frenchman who stood for freedom for all people as far back as 1762.

Our teachers had lived in a portable cottage, with no comforts of any kind, not even running water, for we all went without that luxury for the first four years. There was never a complaint, and it was a real test of the Hampton spirit! Into the new building moved five teachers and eight girls—the girls as happy as if they were stepping into heaven. With this new equipment more training was possible, and with teachers' homes that have now increased to four, home training has increased so that it includes the home canning, a large group of women and girls having lessons from members of their own race.

The slave mother whose training in laundry

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work was not passed on to her daughter, can now see that daughter in the Penn School laundry, an oyster-shell building as attractive as a chapel, with an equipment which is only one step or two above what the simple home affords. For new appliances should be brought in slowly in rural industrial schools, or homes will be left behind. As a day school, in common with country schools generally, we still have to work out the problem of giving this work to a larger number of girls. Perhaps motor trucks or "chariots" may give us our answer, for all we need is more time in our days. Many girls must spend three or four hours trudging long miles on the oyster-shell road, or through sand sometimes ankle deep. We must see to it that they start from school in time to reach home by sunset, and in the short winter days some must start for school

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by "dayclean," even with school beginning at 9:30. So time is a serious element to battle with in trying to give all-round training in home-making to the Island women and girls.

But home-makers are surely being made; young women who will see to it that their children do not skip the lessons they themselves learned—young women who are seeing clearly that there is dignity in labor well done.

It is these oncoming Negro women who have had a chance at the new training, who must be reckoned with in any sweeping generalizations as to the grandchildren of the slaves. Potentially they are of first importance, but in number, through no fault of their own, they are few; for at best such schools as Penn touch only the fringe of a generation, and in many districts the public schools run for only four to six months a year and offer few lessons in

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home culture. The people who have criticized the industrial inefficiency of the younger Negro men and women have often been the very ones who have opposed the expenditure of money or questioned Negro education.

One of the criticisms we most often hear of the "young race" is that they spend all their own money on their backs. They do, some of them, as many a city street will convince you. But this very matter of clothes, after all, is not to be so simply disposed of. It reaches deep, as Carlyle has shown in his *Sartor Resartus*.

Slavery to our Islanders meant field work, with no opportunity for the women and girls to dress as they chose and when they chose. Field workers were given their clothes as they were given their rations, only the clothes were given usually as a part of the Christmas celebration, "two clothes a year," explained one of

them as she remembered the old days. With the hunger for books very naturally came the hunger for clothes, pretty clothes and more of them! And so with school and freedom best clothes came out and ragged clothes were kept for the fields. Work and old "raggedy" clothes were so closely associated in the minds of the large group of middle-aged Island folk when we began our industrial work in the school in 1904 that we found it a real difficulty to meet.

Early teachers had been responsive to this craving for more and pretty clothes and very properly encouraged it. It meant an advance step and it was not surprising that our boys and girls, and their parents back of them, scorned the idea of overalls and aprons in school! A whole generation had abandoned work clothes and bare feet, when they left the fields for

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school. When we visited the homes, many a parent was not over-pleased to have us see the children in their old garments, and many a boy and girl "ran to de bush" wishing they had on those best clothes which had been safely put away in the cracker boxes or little trunks when they reached home.

Here was one of our big jobs, not only to introduce work into the school with all of its educational values, but to develop a sense of proper clothes for work. We have not yet achieved the standards of such industrial schools for southern white children as Miss Martha Berry's in Georgia, where the boys and girls are uniformed in overalls and work dresses. But none the less overalls are more and more common with us; aprons and plain dresses are here to stay.

The jump from bare feet to shoes marked an

epoch in race development. Mr. Macdonald, the Island merchant all through the early days, told me of how the people enjoyed the shoes that "talked" as they walked up the aisle in church to deposit the nickel on the collection table. Proper styles in footwear were known and demanded. When narrow toes were in demand, and the clerk was showing a pair of "common-sense," he was met with the question, "Ain't yo' got no shoes keener in de mout'?" But this advance in footwear has proved a mixed blessing. Even in warm weather the children did not want to come to school in bare feet. One morning as they marched into Darrah Hall for chapel service, I noticed a dozen pairs of unshod feet, so at the close of the service I said, speaking to the lower grade children, "I can count just twelve sensible children this

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morning!" and then I told them how these boys and girls were helping their fathers and mothers by saving their shoes and stockings for the cold weather. The shod feet in the front rows could be seen wiggling under the seats. The next morning a row of little brown bare-footed boys and girls were seated along the porch steps in front of my office when I appeared, and I was greeted with the question, "Is yo' gwine count de sensible chillun dis mornin'?" You may be sure I did, and there were thirty-six!

This would have shocked our predecessors who had encouraged shoes as an important part in the process of civilization. The wheel has turned so that it is now as much a mark of freedom to leave the shoes at home as it used to be to wear them always to school, and I am sure

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the children enjoy this new freedom as well as their parents did the old, and that their feet enjoy it better!

In winter, however, shoes are needed and it is impossible to say how many of our Island children have been enabled to stay on the road of education because of shoes from our Sales House shelves. Here eggs, chickens, sweet potatoes, work, are all as good as cash in payment, and so the problem for some of the poor is partially solved. "Chicken fo' shoes" is often synonymous for chicken and a chance at schooling.

How glad I was one morning that a generous parcel post package of shoes had arrived. In came a mother who had "raised four children of her own and was now responsible for an "adopted," the invalid sister's little daughter. "I come fo' ax yo' fo' shoe fo' Mary fo' to

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finish out school wid. Her shoe too bad to come, but I cyan't stop her, she bound to come anyway. I blush for ax, but I jus' mus', jus' a pair fo' finish out school wid. I might jus' as well send her to school, fo' ef I ain't, seem like she brek her heart. She jus' stan' roun' an' cry an' carry on."

City fashions can play tricks on us! We had been making an attack on patent leather shoes as being too expensive because they had not the proper wearing qualities. That year, 1911, came our big storm, the storm that destroyed crops and homes so that relief work was necessary. We had to give help to many and appeals were sent broadcast. A friend secured from a manufacturer a large box of new shoes and the afternoon of their arrival we turned loose a group of youngsters to the Sales House to be fitted out from this windfall. The next

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day I faced a row of patent leathers, one pair even going so far as to dare bright red tops with tassels, swinging in ecstasy in front of me!

Another day I looked out to see an oxcart coming in the school gate. It was filled with children—"mudderless" who had collected themselves and come down for clothing and shoes for school. It was a glad feeling to send them back shod and partially clothed. And when the letter came from a home containing numberless children and "grands," saying: "Emanuel's feet are on the ground. Will you see can you find him a shoes? Please try to manage him a shirt," it was good to see Emanuel coming to school because the Sales House could supply his needs. So it goes, in and out of school, on the road and off again, because shoes wear out, or clothes become out-

at-elbow, and a self-respecting pride forbids “raggedy” clothes to go to school.

We found that a great many of the women could sew well. Sewing had an important place on every well equipped plantation. Aunt Katharine patching the clothes in her little house on Hickory Hill plantation learned how from her white mistress, and all through her early life as a slave she was held responsible for the mending of the clothes of her little charges. When our great storm of 1911 wrecked many homes and we faced the problem of providing cash for those who were able to work, gingham aprons came to the front. Women came in from all directions; they each made at least one apron under supervision of our sewing teacher and then carried more work home, to be paid in cash for the finished product. We, in turn, could sell most of the aprons.

Laura Josephine Webster writing on The Operation of the Freedman's Bureau in South Carolina says, "It is interesting to note that the germ of the present industrial education of the Negro existed in Beaufort (which is our nearest town, located on Port Royal Island), where a New York woman was teaching sewing to 113 colored girls." This was in 1863. It is a pity the germ did not develop so as to spread through all the schools, and that the contagion once caught did not become chronic! Much of the criticism now heard would have been destroyed in the bud.

None the less, years before we reached the Island, sewing had taken its place in the Penn School curriculum. We started our battle for work aprons in our sewing-room and we bought the prettiest gingham we could find and cut it by the prettiest pattern. We wanted the girls

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to connect aprons with work, wherever done; to replace the old idea with the new one, that both work and work clothes could be attractive. When they saw each other decked out so becomingly in the new aprons and found that they were to be kept at the school, just like school books, the leaven began to work. All the books belonged to the school in those early days and none were allowed to be taken home. And so aprons were in a measure dignified as school equipment along with books.

While some knew how to make clothes, we found buttons and hooks and eyes an acquired taste. Little girls would come to school with their clothes pinned all up their back; even the older girls found pins very useful. The battle for overalls and aprons was winning out. Now came the fight on pins! The teachers and principals struggled and failed. And then we

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put it in the hands of the Public Service Committee.

No school should be without this committee or its equivalent. It was Miss House's idea and in our rural school it filled the need for the first step in self-government among the students. Boys and girls elected by the pupils in the upper grades, with a committee of teachers to meet with them, are able to handle many a school question, in this way serving their public and making a public opinion that can be counted upon. When Ophelia Fields, the chairman of the Girls' Committee, took hold of the pin problem, pins began to disappear. Down the line of girls she and her committee marched every morning and the pins became conspicuous to the whole group and fairly pricked their owners! In about six months that skirmish was won.

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We found no fancy work being done in the homes, plain sewing and quilt making being the extent of the hand work. There were no handcrafts for the women, for field-working women had had no time for them. Making baskets from the rushes that grow in our tide rivers is the real handcraft of these Islanders, and here, as it had been in Africa, it is man's work, not woman's. In the early days of freedom, Mrs. Virginia told me, the women tried to knit, but as they had only cornstalk needles, they soon grew discouraged. Now our girls are hungry to make pretty things, embroidery, lace work, pretty clothes and pretty under-clothes. They learned to knit during the World War, and many pairs of sturdy socks and many a sweater was sent to the Negro soldiers. But like their white sisters, knitting was laid aside after the armistice, and in their

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case the lack of yarn was one reason, for wool is expensive.

When young people live in a tropical or near-tropical climate, it is no wonder they love personal adornments. Color plays so large a part in their lives. Here we have the bright birds, Kentucky cardinals, bluebirds, nonpareils; here we see acres of bright-colored blossoms in the fields for a longer season than in the colder North; even the cotton crop means a flower garden, for the wonderful yellow blossoms turn a rose pink and then a pomegranate red, as the days pass. Often one sees all these colors and the matured snowy cotton on one plant.

When spring comes to the Islanders, it fairly shouts. The new greens of the oaks, the yellow jessamine, the little front yards with their daffodils, and later the oleanders and the crêpe

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myrtles, all this must affect the young race and it does. Flowers appear in the boys' button-holes and in the girls' hair, and I think Dame Nature is the one who has given the Negroes their love of color so often criticized by us of a colder race. If this innate love for color and ornament were developed, not as we Westerners feel it, but as they as an Eastern people feel it, America might be made richer.

The passing of the bandanna has been a distinct loss, I think, in our rural life. The women used always to wear this bright-colored head-dress wound close to show the shape of the head. When we reached the Islands nineteen years ago, bandannas had begun to go, the black and white head-cloths had taken their place, and hats had found a place on top of the head-cloths. Now only occasionally does one see the bright-colored bandanna of the old days

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and in its passing we have lost an eastern touch in our western world that might well have been encouraged.

Speaking of bandannas, one naturally thinks of hair. While all the white races are longing for curls and hundreds are willing to sit under the hands of the hairdressers for a "permanent wave," the Negro newspapers give hundreds of advertisements of "hair straighteners" and "lengtheners," and many of the young are achieving straight, glossy hair that can be arranged most effectively in this day of bobbed hair among the whites. Meanwhile the teachers as well as the older girls are waging a continual war on the strings that are sometimes used in braiding the hair of the little tots, a custom used in the old days, some mothers have told me, to help make the hair grow, and also to save time, for alas! the braids could "stay in"

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indefinitely. The young Negro women teachers are a continual object lesson to the Island girls in their dress and coiffure. The cultivated Negro woman knows how to dress simply and in perfect taste. Probably on the money she spends, she is among the best dressed of any race.

But enough of clothes. What I have said of the passing of the bare feet to shoes "keener in de mout," of the cycle from turbans to coiffures that have all the flare of an Egyptian fresco, from the "two clothes a year" to hand-embroidered undergarments, will convey at least to my women readers that youth and sex are "kinnery" the races through. What I have written about clothes throws light on the psychology of the wearers in a period of transition—an adolescence true of the group as well as of the individual. Three generations have

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bridged the gap “Up from Slavery” from the Negro “Street” of plantation days to the self-dependent households of freedom.

Here let me add from the experience of a few of my younger friends some evidences of the new leadership of the new generation in the older women’s vocations—as mothers and nurses and home-makers.

There are two young women now in the schoolhouse teaching the Island children, who used to walk to school at Penn from their plantation homes. Arabelle Washington and Catherine Gregory began as youngsters, and so traveled up and down the road, through the grades, into the vocational class, and boarding department, and finally into the graduating class. Then each one went into a county school on Ladies Island for a year of teaching to earn the necessary money to take her to

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Hampton, for they longed for the larger life that they saw in their own teachers. Long years at Hampton, where they entered the work class and worked their way through, built stability and power into their characters. "Do you want us back at Penn? We shall go nowhere else if Penn needs us," was the joyful message sent to us on the Island five years later. And Penn did want them back, that they might give again the gift that had been given to them.

Albertha Robinson came from Hilton Head Island where a boat touches three times a week. As a matter of fact, it doesn't touch the island. You leave the little river steamer and jump down into a bateau that is rowed out to meet you. Albertha had no mother and father and it was a struggle, this education business, for as I have said clothes and shoes and books take cash. But I have not told how the poorly paid

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Negro teachers put their hands in their purses and help their pupils over the "rough and ruggedy road." I come on these stories by accident, and they always thrill me. Penn School teachers helped Albertha Robinson many a time.

As a Penn graduate, she went home to Hilton Head Island to teach, and our visit there one spring day was a glad one. She lived far off on a lonely plantation with her little old grandmother. The house, and the fence, too, had been whitewashed within and without by Albertha. The garden was planted, the trees cared for, and there we found a graduate who could give herself to her group every day in the week. On Saturdays her club of girls, The Happy Links, met at her home, and on Sundays she taught the children in Sunday School.

Before Albertha, came Nancy Wright to

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Penn School. Then we had no dormitory and as Nancy lived just on the edge of "The Main," she had to live in the community, working for her board. She brought her rice from home, pounding it in the primitive mortar and pestle made out of oak. She was in the first class to graduate after the beginnings in industrial education had been made, and all through these years she has been working with the girls, as our matron's assistant, and serving as an interpreter. Tall, straight, as quiet as an Indian, she holds the traits of both races as her birthright—their endurance, their quietness, their patience.

The strength of the Negro teachers lies in the fact that they have made the journey; they are of the race and know their own strength and needs and weakness. Their background of inherited wealth, not of money but of those

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things that are of greatest value, is less than that of the white teachers, but when there is ambition and a love for hard work, the Negro teacher can keep head and shoulders above her class and be a leader they love to follow for she inspires them to be like her.

There is a similar spirit in the new home-makers. Theirs is a struggle to get footing for the family in their community, a better chance for their children than they had. These young mothers work hand in hand with the teachers of Penn School. They continue to come to school through our clubs—Penn School, Graduates, and Home-makers. The most progressive are usually those who have been under the influence of the industrial work in the school. They know its value and have had in their lives something of the teaching and the struggle their mothers and grandmothers

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had in slavery days. The gap has been in some measure bridged.

One morning after Benezet had opened, I remember meeting a mother walking up the road with two girls, each with a bundle in her hand. They had come over from Coosaw Island, and never before had they had so large an experience. I can see them now, as neat as pins, as dark as the richest mahogany, with rather frightened eyes, for they knew not white people, as none lived on their own island; so soft were their voices we had to ask them their names again and again. Redel Ladson, and Ophelia Fields were the musical alliteratives that finally became so well known to us, and now to all St. Helena.

Redel with her little family of four sons and one daughter will show you her home with a quiet pride and dignity that is good to see. The

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house stands on its own acres. The living-room has a bright linoleum on the floor, and books and pictures. A refrigerator made by a boy in the Penn School carpenter shop, a porch, trees in the yard, a new roof of asbestos shingles, all make this little whitewashed, happy home stand out in its community.

And Ophelia? Yes, go and see her too, and while you will find no children in that home, you will find a real community worker. She has a small shop where neighbors drop in to buy second-hand clothing or shoes. A corn mill with a gasoline engine grinds their corn. She will show you her pure-bred Duroc Jersey pigs, her Rhode Island Red poultry, her turkeys, her cow. The ever-blooming rose bush in the corner of her yard, bending over her whitewashed fence, gives greeting.

A school like ours is like a factory; its ulti-

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mate product, homes. The process of education has woven its way through the generations of the race in this country, and the past has a vital connection with the present. And so our Baby Day is a celebration as well as an educational day. It is a day for the midwives, many of them the grandmothers representing the long march down the road since slavery, a day for the young householders, and for all the babies under four years old. And, as you will see, our first celebration was made possible because we relied on the understanding and coöperation of the graduate mothers of the school.

All about the hall were posters sent by the State Health Bureau, and the Child Welfare Bureau in Washington, so the family groups could see that they were taking part in a movement that did not belong just to St. Helena Island. This idea in itself was worth the effort!

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The posters made by the nurse and her committee struck at local conditions, and told stories that should go to every mother's brain and home. But even more vivid than the posters was the exhibit of things necessary for the better health and comfort of the baby.

Here was a full set of baby clothes, made in the sewing classes, and every mother could see how inexpensively the baby might be properly cared for, every bit of the material having been bought at the local stores. When the time came to go home every mother was given a full set of newspaper patterns, so that she took away more than an idea, which might be forgotten. Then, as she faced the front of the room, she had before her other pictures of practical possibilities in her own home. There was a table set for the baby's bath, another set with a proper meal for a one-year-old child, and be-

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hind it a doll dressed properly, which made the children look harder than their mothers. A fireless cooker, made out of a lard pail and tub, showed how cereals could be cooked and how milk could be kept cool in the summer.

One exhibit that always arouses interest is the baby-basket—one of the wood baskets from the school shop placed between two kitchen chairs over which was hung mosquito netting. Probably this is very similar to the basket Moses slept in on the river Nile; the traveler finds the same basket made in Africa to-day. Two of our young graduates sent the white enamel crib they had produced for their own baby, and that showed the fight is being won, at least among the younger group, to get the baby into his own basket or crib, and out of the big bed between father and mother. Another pair of young graduates sent in their baby car-

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riage for the exhibit, and mosquito netting showed how that could also meet the problem of sleeping quarters.

The fun began when the actual weighing and measuring started. Mothers and babies had been fed, and a jolly time they all had together. Back to the hall they came after their lunch, and some of the weary little people took naps on the cot beds which had been provided for just such a contingency. Every baby was finally measured and weighed—clean, sweet babies from all over the Island, dressed in their very best, and always with the bit of color on them which made their brown velvet skins shine in contrast; the excitement of the day made them all “little brown babies wiv spa’klin’ eyes.” Scales and the measuring rod were hard at work while mothers and “middlers” could visit and study the exhibit. When the height

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and weight were up to the standard required by the federal Child Welfare Bureau, a blue ribbon was won, and reds were given to the nearly perfect babies. All the graduates' babies won the blue, which showed that the lessons in hygiene in school were really bearing fruit.

But it didn't go so smoothly as I am writing it! When we started our first Baby Day, we found opposition because one of the women of wide influence among her neighbors circulated the idea that we wanted all the babies brought to the school just to take their pictures and send them North. Others thought it might do some harm to the babies, that there must be an element of danger lurking somewhere in so new an idea. The nurse came to me with tears in her eyes and feared the plan was scotched. "We will have our graduates' babies anyway," I said, "and make a beginning with that group;

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and I won't take a single picture." The next year, however, I spread the message early that I should be there with the camera to take every baby's picture if the mother wanted it, and that she could buy the picture for ten cents and have prints made to send to relatives. Every mother wanted the picture. I took snapshots that hot May day, till I was exhausted!

In this concluding chapter I have tried to place the young country woman against a background that explains the upward struggle she has had to make. I have shown the advance of the women field hands to householders, from the hut on the "Street" to rural homes, from an ignorance of health measures to their study and practice. I started with reference to that widespread prejudice against the young Negroes which is often based on the lack of an understanding of the forces and conditions that have

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surrounded them. This gap in understanding is especially tragic in its isolation of the young people of the two races in the South.

Great tide rivers seem to typify the separation of the young people of the two races. There can be mutual respect only through knowledge. Many of the oncoming generation of the white race are coming across the rivers. When they understand the conditions, the struggles, the successes of the oncoming generation of the black race, a struggle shared to its depths by the women of the race, then we can hope that the great experiment in democracy has a chance of winning out. As one of our Island farmers put it, "A good understanding is a good stand."

THE END

